JUNE 1961

Commentary

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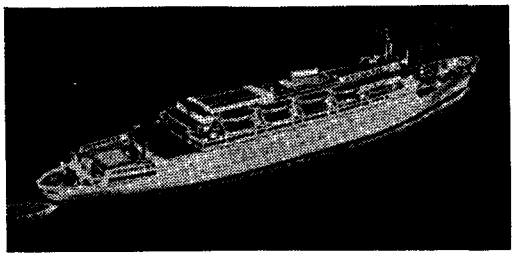

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DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN

"BOSSES" AND "REFORMERS"

A Profile of the New York Democrats

THE MORNING John F. Kennedy spoke to the New York delegation prior to the voting at the Los Angeles convention, he reminded the New Yorkers that the Democratic party was founded in the course of a botanizing expedition up the Hudson River valley, which had brought Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr together to talk politics. By almost any calculation, this would make the New York Democratic party the oldest political organization on earth: the British Tories, the American Republicans, the French Radicals are all venerable institutions, but the New York Democratic party was in the second half of its first century before even the oldest of these others was established as a permanent organization.

Of all the institutions that Jefferson helped to found, there is surely none that would please him more, in its freedom from the burdens of tradition, than the New York Democrats. They have no ceremonials, no mace, no ancient customs; it is unlikely that anyone could say for certain just where, if anywhere, the records of fifteen or twenty years back are stored. (But would even Jefferson have dared hope that after one hundred and sixty-odd years of continuous existence, the oldest political party in the world would still have its offices in a hotel room?) To be free of tradition, however, is not to be free of the past. In the months since Los Angeles, the New York Democrats, after helping Kennedy to carry the state by 375,000 votes, have been torn apart by a controversy—involving the related efforts of the "reform" Democrats to get rid of Carmine De Sapio as leader of Tammany, and those of the Kennedy administration to get rid of Michael H. Prendergast as state chairman—that has its roots in the very origins of the party.

It is helpful to think of the dichotomy that shaped those origins: Jefferson and Burr, aristocratic idealist and Tammany politician. (But this is helpful only if one avoids stereotypes concerning which type knows most about getting on in the world: consider the outcome of Jefferson's career as against that of Burr.) The more immediate source of the present controversy, however, can be found in the choice of Franklin D. Roosevelt over Al Smith for the Presidential nomination in 1932. Smith's defeat was a sharp blow to the dominant Irish Catholic group in the party, but it was nothing compared to the shock of the New Deal politics that followed. The "regulars," the old time Democrats, were "out on a limb," Smith told a 1936 campaign audience, "holding the bag, driven out of the party, because some new bunch that nobody ever heard of in their life before came in and took charge of things and started planning every-

DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN, who here makes his first appearance in COMMENTARY, is director of the New York State Government Research Project at the Maxwell Graduate School of Syracuse University. Born in 1927 and educated at Tufts College and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (where he received his Ph.D.), he spent several years on Governor Averell Harriman's staff. His articles have appeared in the *Reporter* and other periodicals.

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thing." James A. Farley's break with Roosevelt in 1940 left the New York Democratic party completely in the hands of the "regulars," mostly conservative Irish Catholics who felt little enthusiasm for what was going on in Washington. The leaders of this group were not necessarily poor men, but their constituencies were emphatically made up of the Catholic working class which produced the great bulk of the Democratic vote.

During this period a change of profound consequence took place that was to give the present controversy its distinctive coloration. The great mass of the New York Jews emerged from the slums to become middle class almost in one generation. However, they remained loyal to the Democrats in far larger numbers than might have been expected from their new economic position, while at the same time a fair number of middle-class Protestants were also developing attachments to the New Deal. Thus was created the special feature of New York politics: the existence of a large, middle-class Democratic vote.

Neither the Jews nor the Protestants entered the party leadership in New York; in a sense they did not even apply for admission, for their main interests and loyalties were concentrated on national politics. It was not really until the New Deal era came to an end in 1952 that the attention of these groups was turned, *faute de mieux,* to state and local politics, where they found in control people with views remarkably different from their own.

The first shock involved Adlai Stevenson. The liberals gave their hearts completely to the 1952 Democratic candidate; the regulars considered him soft on Communism. ("Like sending the cabbage patch to the goat," said James A. Farley, at a later date, concerning the prospect of Stevenson negotiating with Khrushchev.) Besides, it was obvious to the regulars that Stevenson was going to lose. At that point the "reform" movement began to erupt in Manhattan. Significantly —symbolically—the leaders of the reform group were Roosevelt's wife, his Lieutenant Governor (Herbert Lehman), and a former special assistant to his Secretary of State (Thomas K. Finletter).

THE NATURE OF THE reform movement is best seen by the neighborhoods in which the new clubs have taken hold. They are concentrated in Manhattan because that is where the very young, or the very well-to-do, of New York live. The archetype is the Lexington Club, an alliance of millionaires and law clerks, located in the "Silk Stocking" district of the East Side. Typically the reform clubs have succeeded in districts which have a Republican (i.e. middle-class) majority, or in heavily Jewish districts which are middle class but vote Democratic. Generally the reform clubs have replaced old Irish organizations which have outlived their neighborhoods.

Although the reform movement now controls a quarter of the votes on the Tammany executive committee and has elected a Congressman, two Assemblymen, and a State Senator, its success has so far been limited. The main obstacle is geography. Given their choice, liberals live in Republican neighborhoods, and they tend to have virtually no connection with the working class. Therefore, so long as the Democrats remain a basically working-class party, the reform group will remain a decided minority within it.

This in itself is unexceptional; the middle class is always a minority—but it almost always runs things. Here is where the real source of conflict lies: for so long as the Democratic party in New York remains as well a predominantly *Catholic* party, the reformers are not going to run things either. Their perfectly natural inability to understand this has led to much of the present discord.

The divergence in the party between "regulars" on the one hand and "liberals" on the other, operates on three levels. First, there is the difference in class. The

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regulars tend to be working class or lower middle class in origin and, in a curious way, in outlook. The liberals tend to be middle class in outlook, if not always in origin. (The Jewish working class in New York, while decidedly liberal, is to a considerable extent organized in the Liberal party and its influence is therefore hardly felt in the Democratic ranks.) The liberals have been fighting for the class interests of the workers for half a century, but of late—as their efforts have borne fruit—this has resulted in a certain impairment of their own interests as members of the middle class. In any event, they do have class interests distinct from those of the mass of the Democratic party, and their actions have recently been demonstrating this fact. A case in point is their penchant for Governor Rockefeller, whose program is aimed directly at what might be called the first-generation bourgeoisie. When liberal Democrats say that Rockefeller has had the "courage to face up to the tax problem," what they perhaps mean is that his revenue program has added one million workers to the income-tax rolls.

On the second level there is the religious difference. The regulars include every religious and ethnic group in the city except white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. (There is a small group of elite Protestants who will work with the regular party, but they usually do so as a result of a deliberate decision on each side to vary the normal pattern.) Similarly, the liberals include every *middle-class* religious and ethnic group in the city except Catholics. (Again there are calculated cross-overs, but these only emphasize the pattern.) In terms of predominance, the Catholics can be said to run the "regular" party, just as the Jews can be said to run the liberal movement. Jews have great influence, as they have great numbers, within the regular party, but their most vigorous types tend to avoid the role of party bureaucrats. The Women's Division of the Democratic State Committee, however, is dominated by the energetic wives of Jewish businessmen. When the ladies are rewarded for services it is commonly in the form of honorary positions for their husbands.

The main problem on this level is that the Catholic Democrats—as Catholics—no longer have any distinct political purpose in New York State. Catholic legislators from Brooklyn and the Bronx are dependably liberal in their voting records, in fact are hardly to be distinguished from the most ardent ADA member on that account. But their energies are immobilized by two equally powerful and contradictory impulses: almost any large, new program that would appeal to the secular interests of the Catholic population involves an increase in the functions of the state, which almost necessarily involves a diminution in the functions of the church. At the very least, it diverts yet more resources to the public domain. The problem for Catholic politicians is further complicated by a harsh streak of anti-liberalism which is to be found on every level of Catholic society, and which has produced a considerable body of extreme conservatives who nonetheless remain Democrats. Just as serious, until recently the Catholic intellectual community has been too small and too weak to prod Catholic legislators into a concern with the more important political problems of the day.

ALL THIS HAS greatly strengthened the tendency of the regulars to avoid issues altogether. The regular Democrats in the state legislature, for example, are practically an inert mass. What patronage they get from the Republicans is mainly used on bartenders and co-leaders. For a legislative program, the leaders get out a press release at Christmas-time calling for stricter rent control and lower taxes. (By contrast, the Liberal party, which does not elect a single legislator, and cannot hope to do so, comes forth each year with an exhaustive legislative program.) The New York electorate knows what it might expect from a Democratic legislature: it has sent a Democratic majority to Albany

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for only three years of the 20th century.

The liberal Jews and Protestants, on the other hand, have no great problem with the secular state—they more or less invented it. They are extremely program-minded, and marvelously adept at devising new ways to spend money. In the regular party, conferences on issues are regarded as women's work. Once each year the Women's Division has a meeting in Albany which is on the whole well done—but there it ends. By contrast, among liberals, conferences abound on every conceivable issue. Such gatherings, however, are rarely conducive to party unity. For example, the New York Committee for Democratic Voters recently held a large, day-long conference on state legislative issues at which the featured luncheon speaker warned that a higher education bond issue being proposed in Albany would permit building loans to *parochial* colleges. The regulars react to this much as the liberals would respond to a speech by a Bronx Italian protesting that an increase in competitive state scholarships for higher education would only give further advantage to the children of middle-class Jews—a view not unknown in Albany, but emphatically not expressed. This is not the way regular Democrats conduct political business.

The third level of divergence is cultural in a broad sense. The liberals are people with what is called a high rate of upward mobility. Not so the regulars, who incline to stay near the old neighborhoods, speaking with the old accents, even after they have become rich and successful. This makes for quite different views of what constitutes proper conduct in the political game. To be upwardly mobile means to be successfully aggressive—a preeminent trait of liberals, for all that their aggressiveness tends to be of the sophisticated variety. The regulars generally view such liberals as persons without enough manners to wait their turn.

The liberal combination of energy and ability has been an invaluable asset in appointive politics; when an elected Democratic (or Republican) official comes to choose his staff, he chooses liberals. Thus President Kennedy has appointed a host of New Yorkers to his cabinet and subcabinet—from the Secretary of State on down—but these have almost without exception been liberals with, at best, a fleeting and embarrassed relation to the regular party organization. But there were no organization candidates for Secretary of State. Neither were there any Catholic candidates. Although any number of highly educated and intelligent persons can be found among the conservative Catholics in the party, Catholic education does not, it would seem, produce the kind of excellence American society wants.

THIS, HOWEVER, is not the whole story; the success of the liberals in private life and in appointive politics is balanced by their relative failure in elective politics. Politics is a neighborhood business, and liberals are not neighborhood people. Consequently, while they have been getting all the glamorous jobs, the party organization has remained solidly in the hands of the conservative regulars. The sixty-two Democratic county chairmen in New York are as unrepresentative in one direction as are the members of the Lexington Democratic Club in the other. There are, for example, only two Jews in the entire lot, and these are relative newcomers. (Invariably a majority of the county chairmen are Irish Catholics.) The Democratic party in New York City does not send a single white Anglo-Saxon Protestant to the state legislature, or to the United States Congress. And the five county leaders of New York City are normally all Catholics, either conservative or apolitical.

At the risk of simplifying a most complex subject, it can be said that the liberals, accustomed as they are to success in every other sphere of life, simply do not understand how and why people like the regulars should have come to dominate

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them in the party offices and legislative posts, and therefore they have resorted to "bossism" as an explanation. On the other side the party regulars regard the liberals as pushy, arrogant newcomers who do none of the work in turning out the vote and yet get all the gravy. This feeling—aggravated by the liberal habit of impugning the motives of anyone they disagree with—has led many of the regulars to the point of high irrationality. Men who started out as perfectly sensible practical politicians in Morrisania and Greenwich Village and the like, have ended as snarling monomaniacs who go about proclaiming that they would prefer to lose every judgeship in the city before taking a solitary vote from "that ADA crowd." And since many of the regulars are men of capacity (which tends to be overlooked because their abilities are not marketable in midtown New York), their opposition to liberal encroachment has been effective.

YET, IN ORDER TO put together a majority of the votes at the state level, neither group can do without the other and both together must have the support of the Liberal party. Since World War II, out of all the elections that have been held, Democratic candidates have carried the state only six times, and only four men (Herbert Lehman, Averell Harriman, Arthur Levitt, and John Kennedy) have been able to pull off the trick. Of these, two—Lehman and Kennedy—won largely on personal appeal. Only the election of Harriman and Levitt in 1954 was a genuine party victory, brought about by a successful coalition put together by Carmine G. De Sapio.

De Sapio is incomparably the most able politician the New York Democrats have produced since Farley. He is just that, a politician. The extent of his *ideological* commitment may be measured by his pronouncement to the Holy Name Society Communion Breakfast of the New York Sanitation Department that "there is no Mother's Day behind the Iron Curtain." This is, of course, the source of his ultimate failure: he is not in the least interested in government, only in politics. It is simply too bad that he should have come to power in a world in which this was no longer good enough.

Having grown up as an Italian among the "outs" of an Irish Catholic party, De Sapio was always perfectly aware that the party executive committee does not necessarily reflect the exact composition of the party constituency. When he took over the leadership of Tammany his position was quite clear. He already had the votes of the conservative Democrats; the next step, therefore, was to win the liberals. This he accomplished by making liberal speeches and nominating liberal candidates: Robert Wagner, Averell Harriman, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., and so on through the list—an approach that worked extremely well once it got organized. Tammany had touched bottom in 1952. In 1953 De Sapio elected Wagner Mayor of New York. In 1954 he sent Harriman and Levitt to Albany. By 1956 he even had a candidate for the Presidential nomination. But here his downfall began.

De Sapio's support for Harriman against Stevenson at the 1956 convention alerted the Roosevelt-Lehman-Finletter group to the fact that there were limits to De Sapio's liberalism. These limits were definable as the point where the gain in liberal votes at one end of the spectrum was outweighed by the loss of conservative votes at the other. De Sapio knew his party; in 1956 Stevenson lost the state by 1,589,571 votes, but the New York Democratic party itself—having supported Harriman at the convention—did not suffer a grievous defeat.

A similar situation brought about the debacle of the 1958 Democratic state convention, which led to the downfall of almost everyone concerned. The significant feature of De Sapio's 1954 slate had been that for the first time in memory there was no Irish Catholic among the candi-

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dates, and therefore the 1958 nominee for United States Senate had to be an Irish Catholic—unless Wagner, who is Catholic and half-Irish, were to be chosen. When Wagner declined after the two-day convention got underway, a bitter dispute arose over which Irish Catholic candidate the party should offer.

The New York City party chairmen wanted the Manhattan District Attorney Frank Hogan—a man who was living evidence that there existed able and distinguished party regulars who had stayed at home, as it were, but had yet rendered service of the highest order to American government. (Farley's gibe that Hogan's knowledge of foreign affairs was limited by the Battery on the south and the Harlem River on the north, was in a sense a recommendation.) Wagner and Harriman had nothing whatever against Hogan, but felt that liberal sentiment would demand a candidate more closely identified with foreign affairs, and thus they backed Thomas E. Murray of the Atomic Energy Commission. Lurking in the background of this move was the fear that Hogan's candidacy would be labeled as an attempt by Tammany to get rid of the one man who had maintained a modicum of law enforcement in Manhattan over the previous decade and a half.

No one present in the hotel room during this argument was behind Thomas K. Finletter for *that* nomination, and when the meeting broke up in an impasse—the tempers of proud men having been lost—the party leaders went off to nominate Hogan, and Wagner (with Harriman's support) went off to nominate Murray. On the way to the convention hall, however, Wagner was persuaded by Finletter supporters not to announce a preference for *either* Murray or Finletter, at the risk of incurring the wrath of the liberals. Since the party leaders had the votes anyway, Wagner let it go at that. He spoke for no candidate and a free contest ensued. Hogan got 772 votes, Murray 304, and Finletter 66.

Despite this emphatic evidence that Finletter, although widely respected and esteemed, was the choice of hardly anyone for the 1958 Democratic nomination for U.S. Senator, the liberal group in the party decided that Hogan's victory had been dictated by bosses, which in turn produced the impression that Harriman had been for Finletter, but had been unable to enforce his wishes.

In Connecticut at this time a strikingly similar situation arose with, however, very different consequences. Thomas E. Dodd, an Irish Catholic party regular, and Chester E. Bowles, a foreign policy-oriented Protestant liberal, were both candidates for the Democratic Senatorial nomination to run with the liberal—and in this case, Jewish—Gubernatorial candidate, Abraham E. Ribicoff. The Catholic party leaders made exactly the same decision as in New York, with Ribicoff's approval. Dodd was nominated for the Senate, Bowles was persuaded to accept an unlikely Congressional nomination as a gesture of unity and support. In the upshot, everybody won. By contrast, in New York, liberals deserted the Democratic ticket in hordes. Harriman lost to Rockefeller by 593,034 votes. Significantly, Hogan lost by only 132,992 votes, and the Jewish candidate for Comptroller, Arthur E. Levitt (a most able man by any standards), ran 600,000 votes ahead of the ticket and managed to win.

HAVING BEEN BEATEN, De Sapio completely lost his standing among the liberals. Where they had once praised him as the new-style political leader, they now denounced him as an old-style political boss. The Roosevelt-Lehman-Finletter group was formed to rid the party of the "image of bossism" (Harriman, who had the most to complain about, did not join in), and soon the battle was on. Prevented now from exercising his special talent for balancing liberals and conservatives, De Sapio had no choice but to side with the old guard. And once under attack, his

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judgment began to go wrong. In return for some kind words of support from former President Truman, he toyed with Symington's candidacy for the 1960 nomination long after it should have been evident that Kennedy was the one man both his party and the voters would support. Other county leaders came out for Kennedy, and only at the last moment did De Sapio follow suit.

His final act of folly was the attempt to exclude Herbert Lehman—the most respected and distinguished Jewish political figure in New York—from the 1960 Democratic delegation. This move involved De Sapio in a conflict not only with liberal Jewish Democrats, but with all Jewish Democrats—probably a quarter of the party following. The effort collapsed almost the moment it was announced, it being evident to the dimmest clubhouse denizen that here were the makings of party disaster. The state chairman, Michael H. Prendergast, who had at first joined in the move to exclude Lehman, gave up his own seat to make room for the elder statesman. At this point, Prendergast's troubles began.

"MIKE" PRENDERGAST is the quintessential regular. Politics is his profession—his only profession. As if by design, he was born in Jim Farley's home town of Grassy Point in Rockland County, just up the Hudson from New York. He graduated from Haverstraw High School and was in politics before he was old enough to vote. He got his first patronage job (with the Democratic National Committee) at the age of twenty-two, served on the Rockland police force, went to work for the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and in time became county chairman, a post he filled very successfully. In 1955, Harriman, the newly-elected Governor, chose him as state chairman to work at building the party organization in upstate New York.

Politics, Prendergast style, is a decent, quiet, family affair, and the highest priority is assigned to those things which keep it so: patronage, small and not-so-small favors, the strict observance of the complex prerogatives of party members on various levels. "Issues" in the world of Prendergast are viewed as essentially divisive influences that one would hope to do without.

The Democratic party is the life of men such as Prendergast, and—resembling nothing so much as old-time radicals in their passion for the One Big Union—they have a sharp dislike for those who disrupt its orderly, hierarchical functions. Although Prendergast had opposed De Sapio at the Buffalo convention, after the 1958 election he had no recourse but to turn to the Tammany leader for support. When the liberals began to include him in the list of bosses who must go, he responded by trying to act like a boss, although this was not by any means his normal manner.

Prendergast's difficulty with the Kennedy administration was inevitable. During the Presidential primaries, the Kennedys had worked out a highly effective technique for moving into a territory and setting up a campaign organization. This included the brilliant political invention of having the Kennedy representative in any given area be a man from an altogether different state, as often as possible someone with a personal relation to Kennedy himself. The brilliance of this technique was that in one stroke it cut through the tangle of jealousy, interest, and intrigue which normally surrounds the campaign chairman and frequently drains the energy from the operation itself. Accordingly, three of Kennedy's best men were sent to New York. They promptly set about establishing "Citizens for Kennedy" organizations designed to bring into the campaign the great range of groups who were attracted to Kennedy but were not part of the regular Democratic organization, and to serve as a vehicle for reaching others who were not even necessarily Democrats. In New York City the object

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was largely to reach liberal Jews. Upstate the target was conservative Catholics. In between, there was the usual wonderful mixture of all shapes and sizes.

To Kennedy's men these methods seemed the essence of a rational, dispassionate approach to a political problem. Armed with Lawrence O'Brien's masterful campaign manuals, the citizens' groups got underway with much vigor—only to find the Democratic state committee opposing them at every turn. Or so, at least, it seemed. (There is no such thing as objective truth in party politics.) One party, one organization, said the regulars. The Kennedy men pleaded, cajoled, warned. Prendergast's reaction was to try to get one of them removed. By mid-campaign the Kennedy men had concluded that Prendergast simply did not understand how to win an election and would himself have to go.

As the campaign neared its conclusion in New York, the only remaining question was how many Jews could be brought out to vote for the man who had vanquished Adlai Stevenson. At the penultimate moment of the campaign, a great rally was held in New York City with Kennedy on hand. Either deliberately, or through a misunderstanding, Lehman was not permitted to speak, although Kennedy had expected he would. Thus a doubt as to Prendergast's integrity was added to the doubts about his good judgment in the mind of the future President, and Prendergast was in deep trouble with the new administration even before it took office.

Shortly after the election, it was made clear that the administration wanted a new state chairman in New York—one not disposed to face the future with a loss of 25 per cent of the Democratic vote. The difficulty in bringing about a change is that the very people who would have to persuade Prendergast to step down—the county leaders—do not in their hearts feel that he has done anything wrong. The most conspicuous example is Congressman Charles A. Buckley, the Bronx leader. If splinter organizations are distasteful to Prendergast, they are anathema to Buckley. Fighting them is *the* passion of his life. Thus, with the rarest exceptions, no Bronx Democratic candidate is permitted to accept the Liberal party endorsement, even if it means losing the election. Buckley regards Prendergast as a slow, but honorable man, and though he and the other leaders would like to see "Mike" step aside in order to please the President, they can rouse no passion in insisting that he do so. Prendergast, for his part, feels that his integrity was insulted when the administration offered him a federal job if he would resign: if his political decisions could be affected by offers of money, he would not, he declares in private, need a job.

In resisting the President, Prendergast was presumably supported by De Sapio, who carries on his now hopeless fight with dignity and courage. Tammany did without the help of Grover Cleveland, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. It can, in fact, do without John F. Kennedy, but it will most likely in the near enough future prefer to do without Carmine De Sapio instead. But the New York Democratic party cannot easily do without either. Unless there is a dramatic reversal of the present trend toward complete fragmentation, the 1962 elections will go by default. The party leaders know this—one of the best informed estimates of the moment is that, barring such a reversal, Rockefeller will be returned to office by a million votes. Probably Kennedy's best strategy would be to write off the election, rather than to have it appear a test between him and a likely Republican opponent in 1964. But this is not the Kennedy style. He wants to see the New York Democratic party rebuilt.

The *logical* man to unite the New York Democratic party, as the President realizes, is a Catholic liberal. (A working description would be an Irish Catholic county leader who reads *Commonweal.*)

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A number of such already exist, and each year sees more of them appearing: typically, they have come to power in suburban counties where an old-line Catholic party membership has been augmented by a flood of middle-class liberals from the city. William F. Luddy in Westchester and John F. English in Nassau are excellent examples. Both are vigorous, intelligent young men who have ethnic, religious, or intellectual ties with all the elements in their party. Each has brought large numbers of middle-class workers into the party bureaucracy.* Neither Westchester nor Nassau has yet gone Democratic, but the Republicans no longer take them for granted.

IN CASTING ABOUT for a Catholic liberal to succeed Prendergast, the President chose Peter J. Crotty of Buffalo. Crotty is a working politician from a big, ugly, turbulent city, where tens of thousands of Democrats but very few liberals live. He has managed to bring together a baffling collection of Democratic factions to produce an effective party organization in Buffalo. He is a man of intellect, a diligent student of Catholic social theory, a formidable labor lawyer, and a passionate believer in racial equality. (He once resigned as county chairman when the party balked at making the first major Negro political appointment in Buffalo. The party gave in and he withdrew his resignation.) Given all this, Crotty should have been acceptable as state chairman both to the regulars and to the liberals. But the depth of the Democratic division turned out to be deeper than anyone knew, and the New York reform movement promptly announced that Crotty was unacceptable. The reason was visceral rather than logical, much as was the Liberal party's refusal to endorse Crotty when he ran for state Attorney General in 1958. Organized liberals cannot help being suspicious of the liberalism of Irish Catholic county leaders who are at ease on city councils and who get along with police chiefs.

Catholic liberals also have their difficulties with the regular party organization. Such Catholics are almost invariably Irish, which gives them a certain tribal acceptability to the (still largely Irish) Democratic leadership, but they do not generally fire the enthusiasm of the Italians, who (with the Poles coming along) are far the most vigorous of the rank-and-file Catholic Democrats. Of all the ethnic groups active at the moment in New York State, the Italians have the strongest political purpose: they are fighting for social equality. De Sapio's demise would be a setback for them, especially since he himself has systematically cut short the careers of a number of promising Italian leaders. (They were usually sentenced to life on the state Supreme Court bench.) Thus if De Sapio goes, there will be a gap in Italian leadership, which is not likely to be filled—in Italian eyes—by yet another Irishman.

In any event, the present Catholic leadership of the party is doomed. It is the fag-end of a succession which made some social sense in the mid-19th century but which knows no purpose today other than to persist in the joyless distribution of increasingly empty emoluments. (What, after all, is achieved by becoming the 116th Irishman to get on the Court of General Sessions? The ennui is even showing among the Italians.) The one honorable course open to the present leaders, to elect a brilliant Congressional delegation and keep it there, has not, with but a few exceptions, been followed. The only

* In Nassau 50 per cent of English's committeemen are Jews, 40 per cent are Catholics, and 10 per cent are Protestants. Some 73 per cent have one—or more—college degrees. This, of course, is not a statistically representative group. It is much too middle class—in Great Neck, English says, he probably hasn't a single committeeman who makes less than $15,000 a year. There is also a disproportionate number of Jews, who account for only 17–18 per cent of the population. But the high percentage of middle-class people and Jews does give an accurate reflection of the distribution of Democratic energies in a suburban county with no party patronage to dispense.

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power left to the city Democratic leaders is to keep the party impotent at the state level—which they may or may not choose to do.

For the moment, all is stalemate. Prendergast, with about fifteen months of his term left to go, refuses to resign, and he cannot be made to do so. (He is elected under the election law and has as much right to his job as, say, the Governor does to his.) A good many upstate county leaders refuse to turn on him for acting as they themselves would have acted (there is a high content of honor in American politics —most politicians, if they only knew it, have a right to feel morally superior to their constituencies), and the Kennedy administration will presumably come for a time to deal with these leaders through Prendergast. But this will hardly change matters. Prendergast is the victim of a deep misunderstanding, but he is not for that reason any the less a victim.

Though the logic of the party's situation now demands a Catholic liberal like Crotty to succeed Prendergast, all the signs are that the New York Democrats are heading ultimately for a period of Jewish leadership. The Jews have heavy influence in the regular organization and predominate in the reform movement and the Liberal party. Unlike the members of other ethnic groups, Jews in different factions are able to talk to each other and to respect each other. The most hard bitten Jewish district leader in Brooklyn, for example, thinks of himself as a liberal, and consequently there are no *semantic* gulfs to separate him from the reformers and the Liberal party. A liberal Catholic, then, or a conservative Jew: one or the other seems likely in New York before long. The winds of change are blowing, and the New York Democrats are moving into an era of the balanced party bureaucracy—a device that may prove as formidable in the future as was the balanced ticket in the past.

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DANIEL BELL

REFLECTIONS ON JEWISH IDENTITY

A PERSISTENT FEAR worried Jews of the early Diasporas and of Hellenistic times: the fear that a child of theirs might grow up to be an *am-haaretz* — a peasant, ignorant of Torah; or, even worse, an *apikoros*—a sophisticated unbeliever who abandons Jewish faith to indulge in rationalistic speculation about the meaning of existence. In either case, the danger felt was that such an individual would not only ignore the commandments and rituals, but that he would, in effect, have lost the sense of his past. Asked, in the classic question of identity, "Who are you?" the *am-haaretz* does not understand; and the *apikoros,* instead of giving the traditional response: "I am the son of my father" (Isaac *ben* Abraham), says: "I am I"—meaning, of course, I stand alone, I come out of myself, and, in choice and action, make myself.

A similar crisis of identity is a hallmark of our own modernity—except that not rationalism, but experience, has replaced faith. For us, sensibility and experience, rather than revealed utterances, tradition, authority, or even reason, have become the sources of understanding and of identity. One stakes out one's position and it is confirmed by others who accept the sign; it is no longer the hand of the father placed upon us—the covenant—that gives confirmation.

Not only the Jew, but all moderns, and particularly the intelligentsia, have made this decision to break with the past. Affecting first revealed religion, and later extended to all tradition and authority, the break has meant that the individual himself becomes the source of all moral judgment. But once experience is the touchstone of truth, then a "built-in" situation develops where alienation from society—which necessarily upholds the established, traditional values—is inescapable. This has meant, in the further fragmentation of society, that individuals have sought kinship with those who share both their sensibility and their experience—that is, with their own generation. The others have had a necessarily different experience. (Here we may see one reason why youth movements, a phenomenon unknown in previous times, are so characteristic a fact of modern life.)

Few of us can escape this mark. This is the way we have been bred. In us, especially the Jews, there has been a hunger for experience. The first generation fled the ghetto or the Pale—the second fled the past itself. For those of us whose parents were immigrants, there was the double barrier of language and culture to confront; and the double urgency of being not only thrust out on one's own, but having to make one's self in the

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course of discovering the world as home.

Yet no one wholly makes himself; nor is there such a thing as a completely cosmopolitan culture. The need to find parochial ties, to share experiences with those who are like ourselves, is part of the search for identity. There is an old truism that in some ways (biologically) we are like everyone else; in some ways (the idiosyncrasies of personality) like nobody else; and in some other ways still, like somebody else. In the parochial search for those like ourselves, the generation, the common age group, is only one tie. Neighborhood, city, country, vocation, political belief, family—these hold other ties. But prior to all—to begin with—one must come to terms with the past. One cannot wholly escape it. One may reject it, but the very mode of rejection is often conditioned by the past itself. A man is, first, the son of his father. In almost all tribal societies, the patronymic is part of one's name. And the sins of the fathers—in the psychological, if not the legal sense—are apt to be the burdens of the sons as well.

For the Jew, his relation to the past is complicated by the fact that he must come to terms not only with culture and history but with religion as well. For the religious tradition has shaped the others, providing both conscience and the continuity of fate. As an agnostic, one can, in rejecting religion, reject God; one may reject a supernatural or even a transcendental God. But as a Jew, how can one reject the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—without rejecting oneself? How, then, does a modern Jew continue to identify with the Jewish fate? And if such an identification is made and conditioned largely by experience, by a generational experience at that, what must be the consequences? The initial problem remains the religious one.

THE SIMPLEST WAY of being a Jew is to be Orthodox—at least in ritual, if not always in faith. An esoteric legend ascribes to Maimonides the affirmation that one does not have to believe in God to be a good Jew, one merely has to follow halakhah—obey the law. This is in keeping, in traditional Judaism, with the derogation of the single individual. As the rabbi might say, "Who are *you* to say that you do or do not believe? Does the world exist for *you*?"

But it is in the confrontation with evil that the judging of God arises. In the *kaddish* of Reb Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev, the 18th-century Tsaddik refuses to speak the Sanctification of the Name until he first arraigns God for the suffering of His innocent Jews. And we know the accusation, two centuries later, of the fifteen-year-old boy who, in Auschwitz on Rosh Hashanah, cries, "Why should I bless Him? Because He kept six crematories working night and day, on the Sabbath and holy days?"*

Maimonides, in the *Guide to the Perplexed,* gave the classic answer to this recurrent cry:

> Very often the throngs of the unreasonable will, in their hearts, put forth the claim that there is more evil than good in this world. . . . The cause of this error is that this foolish man and his unreasonable companions in the throng regard the whole universe only from the angle of individual existence. Thus every fool thinks that life is there for his sake alone, and as though nothing existed but him. And so, when anything happens that opposes his wishes, he concludes that the whole universe is evil. But if man would regard the whole universe, and realize what an infinitesimal part he plays in it, the truth would be clear and apparent to him. . . . It is of great advantage that man should recognize the measure of his worth, so that he may not fall into the error of believing that the universe exists only because of him. It is our opinion that the universe exists for the sake of the Creator. . . .

But if life is not present for *me,* if in the design of the universe "Man is like unto a

* From *Night,* a memoir of Auschwitz, by Elie Wiesel.

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breath," as the Bible puts it, then why fight at all against any injustice or evil? Orthodoxy leads to quietism; suffering is the badge, one accepts it as the mark of fate. One of the more disquieting facts about Jewish behavior in the death camps, as a number of writers have remarked, was the extreme passivity of the people. We know about the ways in which hunger, fright, privation, can depersonalize an individual. But the fatalism that comes out of the religious tradition violates one's conception of a personal autonomy. A modern man wants to believe that some portion of the universe does exist for him, in the here and now. The Orthodox view of Judaism is too constricted for such a man to feel at home in.

The same pride of self leads to skepticism or rationalism as concerns a supernatural view of the world. To the extent that he must reject religion as superstition, myth, or "absurdity,"* to that extent is the modern Jew's loss of Orthodoxy the victory of philosophy over theology, of reason over faith.

A DIFFERENT MODE of Jewish identification lies in accepting the ethical content of Judaism while rejecting the ritual. This has been the path of those who have sought to join the "human" side of faith with the potentialities of science—the path of reform. But if one is too much of a rationalist to accept Orthodoxy, one is too much of an irrationalist to accept the "merely" ethical side of religion. Orthodoxy's view of life may be too fatalistic, but that of ethical Judaism appears to some of us too shallow.

The ethical view is fundamentally syncretistic, drawing on all faiths, for to be valid, an ethical precept must be binding on every man and applicable to all men. Theologically, there is no more justification for a special Jewish ethic than for a Unitarian one, or for Ethical Culture, or for any non-ritualistic creed. The ethical dissolves the parochial, and takes away from individuals that need for the particular identification which singles them out and shapes their community in distinctive terms: terms which make possible a special sense of belonging shared by a group.

Ethical Judaism, in its often superficial rationalism, has taken some disturbing profundities of the Old Testament and transformed them into glossy moral platitudes. In ethical Judaism, a simplistic idea of human nature has led to the belief that there are few human ills which reason cannot remedy. But beyond that, the view of life represented by ethical Judaism is one of simple good and evil, unaware that a tragic component of choice is the fact that it must always involve some evil—a lesson which has been taught us by recent 20th-century history. As Emil Fackenheim once put it in these pages: "In the 20th century, men—all of us—find themselves compelled to commit or condone evil for the sake of preventing an evil believed to be greater. And the tragedy is that we do not know whether the evil we condone will not in the end be greater than the evil we seek to avert—or be identified with it."†

What is left, then, for one who feels himself to be a Jew, emotionally rather than rationally—who has not lost his sense of identification with the Jewish past and wants to understand the nature of that tie? A Jew, we are told by one existentialist thinker (Emil Fackenheim), is "any-

* There is, in the esoteric view, the interpretation that Maimonides views God as a necessary "myth" to hold the masses in check. Man, unrestrained, is a *b'hemah,* or animal, who gives way to his instincts and worships cruel gods. Where man regards himself as the measure, then all means, including murder, may be justified to achieve his unrestrained ends. Individual men could live without myth—the premise of stoicism—but the masses could not. Hence the need for the idea of God for the masses. But then is there not equally the question whether Maimonides, in the cunning of reason, may not have fashioned this rationale for private disbelief actually in order to seduce the *apikorsim*—the unbelievers—to public faith?

† "Can We Believe in Judaism Religiously?" December 1948.

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one who by his descent is subject to Jewish fate"—the covenant; one who by *fate* is urged to *faith*. The ground here is still faith, though the ground is "absurd," in that the compulsions to belief are beyond one's control, shaped by descent and, therefore, by history. But this is an attempt to defend faith, not fate. Lacking faith, I myself can only "choose" fate. For me, therefore, to be a Jew is to be part of a community woven by memory—the memory whose knots are tied by the *yizkor,* by the continuity that is summed up in the holy words: *Yizkor Elohim nishmas aboh mori:*—"May God remember the name of. . . ."

The *yizkor* is the tie to the dead, the link to the past, the continuity with those who have suffered and, through suffering, have made us witnesses to cruelty and given us the strength of courage over pride. However much, as moderns, we reject the utterances of authority and the injunctions of ritual, the religious link with our fellows is not the search for immortality or other consolatory formulas against the fear of extinction—but is the link of memory and its articulation.

All societies have memorial occasions, a day that commemorates an event of the past, a day of mourning for the dead. A memorial day, a holy day, often becomes, in secular terms, a holiday and an escape from the past. The *yizkor* is different. It is recited not just on one day, but on a set of days whose occasions form the wheel of life. For the *yizkor* is said on four days: Passover, Shevuoth, Succoth, and Yom Kippur—the escape from bondage, the giving of the Law, the ingathering of the harvest, and the day of atonement, which is also the day of "at-one-ment."

One lives, therefore, as a Jew, through the meaning of the *yizkor,* through the act of commemoration, through the saying of a common prayer—but singling out in that prayer a specific name of one's own dead. In the *minyan* of my fellows, I am linked to my own parent. In the *yizkor,* through memory, I am identified as a Jew.

If one is a Jew through filio-piety, is such a bond strong enough? Memory has its risks. The sense of the past is often merely the present read into the past. Memory is selective, it screens out the hurts, it throws roseate hues. Remembering what happened in one's lifetime is difficult enough; uncovering the past of history is even more so.

The greatest risk of memory is sentimentality, and Jewish life has paid dearly for its sentimentality. The lachrymose recollections of the *shtetl* (which are still with us) fail to recall its narrowness of mind, its cruelty, especially to school children (to which a whole series of memoirs, such as Solomon Ben Maimon's, testify), and its invidious stratification. In the same vein of nostalgia, there are the glowing reminiscences of the Lower East Side of Williamsburg, or Chicago's Maxwell Street—but they omit the frequent coarseness, the pushing, the many other gross features of that life. At its best, this parochial identification exists as a tie of memory through pity; at its worst, it may be the continuity of appetite—the lox, cream cheese, and bagel combinations; or through comedians' jokes.

A different form of filio-piety is in the satisfying of memory, when there is no faith, by "good works." One is a Jew, discharging one's obligations as a Jew, through membership in Jewish organizations. Here lies the second risk, of accommodation. In the *embourgeoisement* of Jewish life in America, the community has become institutionalized around fund raising, and the index of an individual's importance too often is the amount of money he donates to hospitals, defense agencies, philanthropic groups, and the like. The manifest ends are the community functions being served, but frequently the latent end is the personal prestige—*yichus*. This kind of institutional life may even lend itself to historic forms of corruption: of simony, when those who have risen high in Jewish organizations receive their rewards in appointive office in Jew-

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ish life; and of indulgences, when leadership is the simple reward of wealth. And in performance of charity as a way of Jewish life, self-satisfaction may take on the face of righteousness. The most sensitive of the Jewish agency professionals, lawyers, and businessmen have often deplored this situation, yet are trapped by the system.

But for the intellectual, the greatest risk of memory is its repression—the past is only allowed to come back in the form of self-hate, shame of one's parents, the caricaturing of Jewish traits (most notably verbal agility), the exaggerated thrust of ambition, the claims to superiority by the mere fact of being a Jew, and all the other modes of aggression that arise from the refusal to accept the tension of being in a minority, and the need to balance the insistent demands of the past with the needs of the present.

Coming to terms with this kind of repression often leads to alienation from Judaism, to the feeling of its insufficiency, even when one has some knowledge of its traditions. The alienated Jew is the Jewish orphan. He comes "out of himself," rather than out of a past. He is homeless. The present is his only reality. Lacking a past, he can have no notion of continuity, or any image of the future. For him there can be no *parousia,* no fulfillment. This has been the signet of Jewish fate, particularly in Central Europe, over the last forty years, and it foreshadowed the fate of a whole generation of intellectuals. As W. H. Auden once said of Kafka, "It was fit and proper that [he] should have been a Jew, for the Jews have for a long time been placed in the position in which we are all now to be, of having no home." The problem is spiritual, not territorial. Israel is no answer. The alienated Jew grew up in *galut,* and the world has been his home. Is it his fault that the world has been inhospitable—rejecting those who refuse to assert a distinctive parochial tie? Yet, in the awareness of his rejection, his life is Jewish, too: he is one of a community of exiles whose common experiences are molded by the common fate—and this becomes his parochial tie.

Finally, in this catalogue of risks, there is the risk of attrition. If, in order to give it meaning, Jewish involvement requires some encounter with tradition, so that one may be able to make choices, then succeeding generations, whose encounters are few and whose memories are hazy, must find themselves with fewer and fewer ties. They are in the most difficult position of all. It is not a question of assimilation, for that is a matter of choice, the choice of severing all ties, and one which is made consciously. Attrition is not chosen—it is a wasting away. There is a word, Jew, but no feeling. And this becomes the most tragic consequence of identification solely through memory.

IF IDENTIFICATION IS an interplay of experience and memory, its shaping elements are in the successive generations themselves. Each generation has its own "entelechy"—its own inherent design, which gives the identification its distinct quality. In these days, generations succeed each other rapidly, and each succeeding one is also longer-lived. The characteristic fact about Jewish life today is the extraordinary palimpsest which the different overlaying generational experiences have become. The different generations can be identified with one or the other of the different forms of response I have described (the five risks of memory) as a rationalization of their own experiences.

The basic shaping element of Jewish life in America has been the immigrant experience—an experience with an inner tension of anxiety and hope. The anxiety was an inevitable consequence of being uprooted and living in a strange land. At times it led, particularly for those who lived away from the large urban centers, to a sense of being "a guest in the house" —which in turn led to a minimizing of Jewish life, subduing an inherent drive and ebullience, temporizing with the

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neighbors—attitudes that have persisted in smaller Jewish communities in America and that have been repeated for a new mobile class in the suburbs.

For the bulk of Jewish immigrants, particularly those from Eastern Europe, the anxiety was translated into the struggle between fathers and sons. Few generational conflicts have had such an exposed nakedness, such depths of strain as this. The metaphor of Fathers and Sons that one finds in the Russian literature of the 1860's applied to political generations—there the "fathers" left home to go abroad, while the "sons," when they came of age, initiated the radical activity on the land; but both generations were within the boundaries of a common culture. In the American Jewish immigrant experience, it was the sons who left home, and the very boundaries of the culture came into question—the repudiation of the synagogue, the flight from the parents' language, the rejection of their authority, all of it intensified by the fact that both fathers and sons were living in a strange land.

If the immigrant generation was characterized by anxiety, the one after it was shaped by shame and guilt. However, the generational changes cannot be marked into exact historical periods, for generational time is interlinear. Thus the conflict of immigrant fathers and sons that took place before the First World War repeated itself during the depression of the 30's, when the children of those who came at the tail end of the immigrant wave grew up. And these parallels are refracted in the literature. The first immigrant generation found its literary spokesmen in the emotional outpourings of such writers as Sholem Asch and David Pinski, and the response in a Mike Gold or an Isidor Schneider; while the second wave—more wry, disenchanted, the twice-born—found meaning in Isaac Bashevis Singer, in his gothic, bittersweet, explorations of Jewish *shtetl* life, counterpointed to such revelations as Isaac Rosenfeld and Saul Bellow made in their unsentimental, even sardonic narratives of Chicago Jewish life.

Despite overlaying, three major time spans may be demarked. One may say that the first shaping element of the American Jewish experience came to maturity in the years from 1910 to 1930, the second achieved its awareness with the depression and the war, and the third, now coming into its own, emerged in the last decade and this one.

It was in the second of these generations that the rupture with the past was sharpest, the hunger for experience keenest. In its encounter with American life, the generation broke in two: some ran hard (the Sammy Glicks and the Harry Bogens); others, more openly alienated, became radicals. Ironically, both experiences proved to be a mirage. For those who felt that they had caught the world by the tail, using money as salt, the reality proved empty enough: all that was felt, finally, was the appearance of achievement. Those who left home to seek a new community in Marxism, in the expectation that revolutionary activity could be a vehicle for experience, found themselves caught in a net of abstraction and slogans. They had won their intellectual spurs, found places in the academies or in the world of publishing, but they were politically betrayed.

THE FAILURE OF RADICALISM together with the death of six million Jews in the Nazi gas chambers brought the generation back. Still, coming to terms with the past proved difficult. For the middle class there was Jewish organizational life; for the intellectuals, theology. But the attractions of both have tended to wither. Those whose status has become tied to Jewish life have remained in the organizational milieux. For the intellectuals who once found meaning in theology (one remembers the intense debates about Simone Weil, Martin Buber, and neo-Orthodoxy in the pages of COMMENTARY ten years ago), such problems have worn

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thin; the discussion has turned to more modish topics as Zen or hipsterism, or it has lapsed, more privately, into political philosophy, art, or humanistic studies.

For many of this generation, the burden of shame and guilt has tended to become less heavy through the catharsis of psychoanalysis and self-awareness, and by the attenuating passage of time. What has remained is a stoic mood, perhaps the only possible response of whoever seeks to resist the innocence of naive hope and the harshness of disillusion. Whether the generation still has a further statement to make remains to be seen.

And for the third generation? If literature is still a mirror of life, one of the most striking things about recent decades has been the disappearance, as a genre, of the *roman fleuve*—the family chronicle. Who today undertakes to write a Forsyte saga or a Pasquier chronicle? The thread of family continuity has indeed been broken. In a recent attempt, André Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just,* the family chronicle (about the ancestors of Ernie Levy) seems contrived and stilted; it is no longer within the range of actual experience; the memory is more literary than real.

This seems to be the fate of the third generation: either memory is fabricated, or there is none at all. In suburbia, one sees the signs of the false parochialism, the thin veneer of identity, which rubs off at the first contact with the world. Many new temples are built, and the children go to Sunday school—because "it is good for them." The fathers have made their accommodation—through their children. Yet it cannot last, for what is unreal to the fathers is doubly so, and hypocritical, to the child; the reckoning is yet to come.

There are no parochial ties and no memories for the children of the intelligentsia. They are driven to be educated (with the British tradition as the exemplar) and to be alienated, but without the moorings of the past that their fathers sailed away from. Just as there is something sorry about individuals who become "counter-revolutionaries" without having been "revolutionaries"—accepting someone else's rancor as one's own—so there is something pathetic about proclaiming one's alienation without having known the world one is rejecting. There is, one is told, a new radicalism among the young; but without a central vision of its own, such radicalism can only be a caricature of the past. The warning from Marx is that the repetition of history is farce.

I WRITE AS ONE of the middle generation, one who has not faith but memory, and who has run some of its risks. I have found no "final" place, for I have no final answers. I was born in *galut* and I accept—now gladly, though once in pain—the double burden and the double pleasure of my self-consciousness, the outward life of an American and the inward secret of the Jew. I walk with this sign as a frontlet between my eyes, and it is as visible to some secret others as their sign is to me.

And yet a disquieting fact remains. If this is an identity shaped by experience, what are the "limits" of my responsibility? The philosopher F. H. Bradley (according to G. R. G. Mure's memoir of him) once remarked late in life that, being so old, he no longer had much recollection of his undergraduate days, and if someone produced evidence of a sin he had committed at that time, he would refuse to accept responsibility for it—a reflection of his doctrine that responsibility rests on the sufficient continuance of personal identity.

How responsible am I for the Jewish past, and therefore for its future? My God—even the one of memory and not of faith—is a jealous God. Do I have to accept the sins of my fathers, and my children those of mine? This is not an academic question, for it confronts us everywhere, and most particularly in "our"—the American's, the Western's, the white man's—relations with peoples who now come forth to assert their own identity.

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About five years ago, a group of African Negro intellectuals met in Paris, under the sponsorship of the magazine *Présence Africaine,* to debate this very question. How far, some of them asked, can the sins of the fathers be visited upon the children? What these men were saying was that one could *feel* free only after becoming free, only by some overt act of revenge, symbolic or otherwise, against those who had, by deliberately imposing an inferiority complex upon the Negro, robbed him of his identity. And yet the white men alive now were not those who had committed the original sin—though they continued to benefit from it. Should they be responsible for those who did? And, in the accents of the older tribal morality, these Negro intellectuals asserted that responsibility held unto the third and fourth generations—that the act of revenge was not immoral.

All this has been played out before. Orestes, guiltless but guilty, is driven on to carry out the blood revenge by the primitive law of retaliation. And although at the end of the Oresteia a new order of disinterested justice prevails, it is never wholly satisfying, for one feels that though the Furies have been tamed, the personal act, the act created by one's obligation to the past, has now been dissolved as well. In the *Pirke Avot* is the famous saying of Rabbi Tarfon: "It is not thy duty to complete the work, but neither art thou free to desist from it. . . ." Is this the claim which the acceptance of any parochial tie imposes upon us? This is the question raised when one realizes that one does not stand alone, that the past is still present, and that there are responsibilities of participation even when the community of which one is a part is a community woven by the thinning strands of memory.

IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES

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SAMUEL SHAPIRO

BETANCOURT'S VENEZUELA

Alternative to Castroism?

At bottom the Castro problem lies in the special situation which created it—the misery in which most of the Latin American population lives. . . . The only alternative to Castroism is the democratic revolution which Betancourt has started to carry out. If Betancourt is not successful other Castros will come and other Castroisms rise in revolutions commanded by the anti-American extreme left.

—Estado de São Paulo, Brazil

THE ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS, President Kennedy's ten year plan for economic aid to Latin America, has the merit of emphasizing the need for social reform as a necessary condition for economic growth. The area's archaic and unjust systems of taxation and land tenure, as the President tactfully but firmly pointed out, must be modified if the underprivileged masses in those countries are to enjoy the benefits of modern technology. Aid under the program will therefore be channeled to those nations that are prepared to change the feudal characteristics of their society, so that our assistance does not continue to make the rich richer and leave the poor as wretched as before.

Despite the President's gratifying sophistication about economic aid and his bold rhetoric about "a vast effort, unparalleled in magnitude and nobility of purpose," it remains to be seen if his policies measure up to Latin American realities and aspirations. For the first time in our history we are threatened by a rival ideology in this hemisphere. Fidel Castro's Cuba has already abandoned democracy and capitalism to experiment with the Soviet system of dictatorship and state ownership and control. If Castro survives and achieves some measure of success with his headlong course, the much less spectacular Kennedy Plan may seem too slow to Latin America's awakening masses and the intellectuals who lead them, and a number of Castro-like governments might seize power. A crucial test of our policies will come in Venezuela, Cuba's Caribbean neighbor, the richest nation in Latin America, governed by an exemplary liberal leader, but still plagued with typical economic and social problems.

In the years that have elapsed since the overthrow of a military government in 1958, Venezuela's newly fledged democracy has barely managed to survive a series of attacks by forces of both the left and right. The almost successful assassination of President Betancourt last June, the armed uprising by university students in December, and the series of riots, bus burnings, and insurrections by disgruntled military men in the last few months, have made it seem that the country might be about to slide back into some form of dictatorship. To keep the lid on, Betancourt has had to close the schools, bar Cuban

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newspapers and newspapermen, ban political meetings, jail hundreds of his opponents, and—an embarrassing step for a former revolutionary—call in the army and place Caracas under martial law.

These disorders have been accompanied and intensified by continued signs of economic distress. The construction business is in a severe slump, and exploration and drilling programs in the crucial oil industry are running at about half their 1959 levels. Even with dollar revenues of more than $100 million a month, the current budget has a $250 million deficit; in the past three years Venezuela's dollar reserves have fallen by more than $1 billion. Despite Betancourt's promise that last year's $200 million loan from fifteen U. S. banks was the last his government would make, he is again looking for foreign assistance, and has had to devalue the bolívar, once the world's hardest currency.

These continued deficits and disorders are particularly discouraging because of Venezuela's large and varied resources and the honest, able, and patient leadership of Rómulo Betancourt. If liberal democratic reforms do not work here, they are not likely to be successful in less richly endowed Latin American states. Venezuela, unlike some of its Caribbean neighbors, is not overpopulated; its less-than-seven-million people occupy an area one and one-half times as large as Texas, and only 2 per cent of its land area is at present under cultivation. There is a substantial cattle industry (the country has more cows than people), considerable production of such varied crops as coffee, cacao, rice, sugar, corn, and potatoes, and a remarkable variety of mineral resources. In the Guiana Highlands south of the Orinoco, which contain half the area of the country but only 3 per cent of its population, there are still largely unexploited reserves of asbestos, bauxite, coal, diamonds, and so on down to uranium. The current production of iron ore from the same area's immense reserves feeds a small domestic steel industry and makes Venezuela the largest ore exporter in the world. Dwarfing all these activities is the oil industry, whose output of nearly three million barrels a day makes the nation the third largest producer in the world (after the United States and the USSR) and by far the largest exporter. Oil furnishes 90 per cent of Venezuela's exports, brings the government revenues of more than $2 million a day, and is responsible for the country's per capita income of about $800, the largest in Latin America. With such resources to draw from, it would seem that economic difficulties could be no more than temporary.

Some of the problems facing the Betancourt regime are indeed short-term, dating back from the 1948–58 dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez. Like most Latin dictators, "PJ" stole large amounts of money and wasted still more. He left behind him $1.2 billion in promissory notes and such expensive mementos as an uneconomic $400 million steel plant, a railroad with hardly any freight or passengers, a money-losing government airline, an incredibly lavish Officers' Club, and the magnificent (but generally empty) Hotel Humboldt, perched on a 4,000 foot hill overlooking the capital. These white elephants have caused much of the current pressure on the bolívar.

A more serious difficulty, for a country so heavily dependent on a single commodity for export, is the current world oil glut, increasing competition from the USSR, and the closing of certain outlets for Venezuelan crude oil. The proved reserves in the Soviet Union have risen to 60 trillion barrels, the current output of about three million barrels a day is scheduled to grow to nearly twice that by 1965, and consumption, owing to the shortage of Soviet automobiles, will remain comparatively low. Cut-rate Soviet oil has been finding purchasers in half a dozen Latin American countries, and in Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, West Germany, Ceylon, India, and Pakistan as well, so that

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all the international producers have had to lower prices to meet the competition. When Fidel Castro seized the Standard, Shell, and Texaco refineries in Cuba, the whole of that small but significant market was lost to Venezuela. Argentina, which imported $300 million of oil a few years ago, is now almost self-sufficient, and even exports small quantities, and the Eisenhower-imposed quota on U. S. oil imports has also damaged Venezuelan prospects. As a result of these and other factors, the government's 63 per cent share of oil profits fell from $823 million in 1958 to $740 million last year.

Betancourt, who is only the second democratically elected president of Venezuela (the first, novelist Rómulo Gallegos, was ousted by a junta of army officers and wealthy landlords in 1948), is of course not responsible for the current economic mess. Having come to power just when the slump started, however, he is blamed for it in the same way that Herbert Hoover was held responsible for the crash in 1929. Agricultural workers and unemployed slum-dwellers remember that they were a little better off, economically, in the booming times of Pérez Jiménez (and the Suez oil crisis); "PJ's" ouster brought back civil liberties, but these have now been taken away again, prices continue to climb, and jobs are harder to find than ever. It is not surprising that many *caraqueños* eagerly listen to *Prensa Latina's* glowing accounts of how well things are going in Cuba, and have come to agree with Fidel Castro's attacks on parliamentary democracy as only another disguise for exploitation of the working class.

THE SMOLDERING DISCONTENT that lies so close beneath the surface of Venezuelan life is most readily apparent in Caracas, where a quarter of a million people live in slums as primitive as any in South America. In the past fifteen years the capital's population has shot up from 300,000 to 1.3 million, which is one-fifth of the nation's total. One sees in Caracas the meaninglessness of per capita income figures; it is quite misleading to strike an average between the bureaucrat or businessman living in a gleaming luxury apartment house and the unemployed laborer living in a hut made of packing cases and corrugated iron, without electricity or running water. Such contrasts are sharper in Caracas than anywhere in Latin America. The windows of the splendid Officers' Club, for example, look out over a hillside scabbed over with wretched hovels, from which in the rainy season tons of human excrement wash down. Caracas has more cars per hundred people than any other Latin American city, and traffic jams as bad as those in Detroit or Los Angeles. The visitor is therefore bound to be impressed by the Octopus, a new elevated highway connecting the different sections of town; then he gets a chance to look beneath it, and finds thousands of poor squatters using the road as a substitute for a roof. The capital is the only area Betancourt and his Democratic Action (AD) party failed to carry in the 1958 elections. Many of the workers who seized arms when Pérez Jiménez fled still have them, and there is strong *fidelista* sentiment among the politically important student groups at the university; only the army's heavy hand keeps order.

The social situation out in the countryside is just as lopsided and unstable. A 1957 survey showed that some four thousand landowners, less than 2 per cent of the proprietors of farms, held about four-fifths of all the cultivated land in the country. Two-thirds of all the farms were smaller than thirteen acres, and 14 per cent less than three acres. Some 350,000 rural families, nearly a third of the total population, were without any land at all. Three-quarters of the working force is in agriculture, but the country still cannot feed itself; wheat, corn, meat, and even eggs must be imported from the United States. Already inadequate urban and rural living standards are threatened by a population increase of 3.6 per cent a year.

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These grave social problems are of course nothing new. Venezuela's masses have always been poor, dirty, landless, hungry, and illiterate; what has changed is their former willingness to endure such conditions as part of the natural order of things. The well-named "revolution of rising expectations," kindled by the sight of luxuries at their very doorstep and fanned to a blaze by propaganda emanating from Moscow, Peiping, Havana—and Hollywood—is as strong in the Caracas slums as in any underdeveloped area in the world. Despite his government's economic difficulties, Betancourt is doing what he can in the way of land reform, housing programs, and increased educational opportunities. The difficulty is that expectation outruns achievement, and that opposition parties can always promise more than the government in power is able to deliver.

As is usual in Latin America, the cutting edge of discontent is provided by the students. The armed groups that fortified the School of Pharmacy and defied the police last December showed the source of their ideology by nicknaming their strong points "Stalingrad" and "Sierra Maestra." They are supported by the increasingly radical Republican Democratic (URD) party, which quit the government coalition last November; by the Communists, who got 6 per cent (160,000) of the congressional votes in 1958; and by the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), a *fidelista* splinter of the AD. On the other flank Betancourt is (at times literally) under fire from officers involuntarily retired in 1958, disgruntled captains and colonels on active duty who long for the return of military rule, and occasional assassins hired by Pérez Jiménez or by Generalissimo Rafael Leonidas Trujillo of the Dominican Republic.

THE TROUBLESOME AND dangerous job of dealing with these almost overwhelming internal difficulties is complicated by the increasingly tense international situation in the Caribbean. Dictatorships of the left and right feel themselves menaced by Betancourt's middle-of-the-road regime; the Venezuelan president still bears the scars caused by a dynamite explosion arranged by Trujillo's thugs last June. This attempt on the life of their freely elected ruler by a hated despot naturally brought a wave of sympathy in Betancourt's favor, and strengthened his position. The appeal to violence emanating from Havana is more pervasive and more dangerous. Cuba's economic problems—monoculture, the *latifundio*, and dependence on the U.S. market and capital investments—are so similar to Venezuela's that Castro's radical solutions naturally have a considerable amount of appeal to Venezuelan students, labor union leaders, and left-wing politicians. The social and economic program of the Cuban revolution, its achievements suitably touched up for export, are constantly reiterated by Cuban "tourists," diplomats, and the *Prensa Latina* radio station. Before Betancourt barred Cuban emissaries and the Venezuelan police shot the leader of the 26th of July Movement in Caracas, Castro spent more money in Venezuela than anywhere else. In Havana last Christmas I met quite a few oil workers and union leaders from the Lake Maracaibo region who had been invited by the Cuban government for the year-end celebrations. They were impressed by the farm cooperatives they had seen and were violently in favor of the revolution. "If the Yankees ever attack Cuba," one of them said to me, "we will blow up every one of their wells in Venezuela."

Betancourt's struggle against *fidelismo* has not been helped by the short-sighted policies of the Dulles-Herter State Department and the blundering incompetence of those Senators from Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama who play such key roles in shaping our Latin American policy. Venezuelans remember that Pérez Jiménez got U.S. armaments, loans, and the Legion of Merit, the highest award

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that can be given to a foreign citizen; nobody in Washington objected to "PJ's" tyranny or incredible waste and graft, so long as he met his obligations to New York bankers and cooperated with Standard Oil, Mobil, Gulf, Texaco, and the rest. During his years of exile Betancourt had to swallow numerous slights from American officials anxious to remain on good terms with the dictator, and the restoration of democratic government was greeted by some of those officials with the sour comment that "the investment climate in Venezuela has rapidly worsened."

The United States' moves against the revolutionary Cuban regime have also been managed with little regard for the awkward position in which they placed Venezuela. Last June, for example, the Venezuelan Labor Federation (CTV) and several URD leaders pledged themselves to support the Cuban revolution against its "*Yanqui*" enemies. The U.S. diplomatic delegation at San José that August, however, insisted on a strong anti-Castro stand, a step which most Latin American governments would have preferred to avoid. Angel Luis Arcaya, Betancourt's URD foreign minister and chief of the Venezuelan delegation to San José, fought for a milder resolution; when beaten, he refused to sign the final declaration, and when he returned to Caracas, he was greeted as a hero. It was Betancourt's dismissal of Arcaya, followed by the resignation of all the URD cabinet members, that led to the student riots I have mentioned above. Senators Ellender and Eastland did not help matters when they declared that "what Latin America needs is more dictators like Trujillo" and "wished there was a Trujillo in every country in Central and South America." Shortly afterward, Trujillo was given 322,000 tons of the sugar quota taken away from Cuba. Our diplomatic "triumph" at San José left Castro as strongly in power as ever and achieved nothing but the weakening of an invaluable ally.

IN THE MEANWHILE, the streets of Caracas, still heavily guarded by troops equipped with tear-gas bombs and machine guns, are quiet. The leftist opposition has evidently decided that Betancourt cannot be overthrown by a popular revolution just now, and that a more patient policy is indicated. The government's repressive measures, they believe, will be a continuing source of resentment, and in the long run they do not think Betancourt's moderate reform program will satisfy popular aspirations. The success or failure of these programs during the next few years, will determine the political future of Venezuela, and it is in implementing them that Betancourt is running into a number of obstacles.

A major and seemingly ineradicable difficulty is the continued dominance of the military in Venezuelan public life, and the generals' habit of regarding themselves as a kind of super-legislature. Betancourt remembers quite well that his mentor Gallegos was thrown out of office when the army decided that it did not like his land and tax reforms, and he therefore treats the opinions of the defense minister, General Antonio Briceño Livares, with great caution and respect. The army's loyalty, moreover, must be paid for. Betancourt is obliged to make continual obeisances to the "important role" of the military as "the advance guard for the defense of our sovereignty," and to spend a quarter of his budget on the practically autonomous armed forces. Even so, the 150-year-old habit of conspiracy continues. No elected president has ever finished out his term in Venezuela, and if Betancourt is unlucky or makes a major misstep, the army will send him to join his unfortunate predecessors.

The government's land reform program has also had to be carried out with excessive moderation, and in such a way as not to interfere with any vested interests. Venezuela has never had a tax on land, and Betancourt does not dare to impose one. The Agrarian Reform law

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passed a little over a year ago will not touch privately-owned estates that are under cultivation, and guarantees payment in full for whatever land is expropriated. One plantation in Portuguesa State, for example, was purchased for $480,000 and turned over to some three hundred farm families, who also had to be given loans for seed, equipment, and living expenses. Other farmers have been settled on formerly unused government lands, which require expensive penetration roads and irrigation projects. At the present time about twenty thousand farm families have been resettled on something like two million acres. As Congressman Selden of Alabama pointed out after a visit to Venezuela last fall, resettlement of all the landless rural families at the present rate will take at least fifteen years and cost about $7 billion. Venezuela does not have that much money, and may not have that much time to head off a social revolution. Mild as it is, the agrarian program is bitterly resented by the landholding oligarchs, who see themselves losing their supply of cheap labor and their old status as feudal lords.

INDUSTRIALIZING the nation, the dream of every Latin American government, also presents grave problems. Venezuela is one of the highest cost countries in the world, perhaps the only one whose citizens fly to Miami or New York for an "inexpensive" vacation. Under their new contract the oil workers will receive $23 a day in wages and fringe benefits, so that it is more expensive to hire a man in Venezuela than in Texas or California. These high costs have edged Venezuelan crude oil out of several markets, and make it quite impossible for manufacturers to find an overseas outlet. As a result, Venezuela has had to protect her infant industries with high tariff walls, and to stay outside the developing South American Common Market. But the home market of 6.6 million people, nine-tenths of them bitterly impoverished, cannot support any sizable industrial plant. Betancourt has recently chartered a government industrial corporation which he hopes will make "a second Ruhr" of the Orinoco Valley, but even the officials in charge admit that it will take decades to turn their ambitious blueprints into reality.

The government programs in education and housing are also handicapped by prior commitments and lack of funds. During his first two years in office Betancourt built schools for some 90,000 pupils and provided free lunches for some 100,000 poor children. But half the population remains illiterate, and tens of thousands of students are still without classrooms. Fidel Castro's Cuba, with infinitely smaller resources, and at the cost of a social civil war, has done a great deal more. Illiteracy in Cuba should be all but eliminated by the end of this year. The Venezuelan housing program also lags behind Cuba's. Less than 12,000 low-cost houses have so far been built, and a scandalously large number of them have been set aside for officers' families, who certainly do not need additional subsidies.

Since the government cannot cut the army's budget and is unwilling or unable to impose land or income taxes, the only way to speed up these programs would be to draw greater revenue from the oil companies. But the present state of the world market for oil is discouraging; Venezuela exported 30 million more barrels in 1960 than in 1959, yet received 56 million bolívares less in income. Betancourt's decision not to grant any more concessions has brought new investment to a halt, yet the government oil company formed last year is too small and slow-moving to take up the slack. Officials of the company were not even appointed until a year after its incorporation, and its director hopes, "optimistically," to produce ten thousand barrels a day by the end of this year (as against 1.1 million a day for Creole, a subsidiary of Standard Oil). The company seems to have been established merely as a sop to the nation-

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alist groups who have been demanding a Castro-like expropriation of foreign-owned properties.

The resignation this March of the finance minister, Dr. Thomas Enrique Carillo Batalla, after only three months in office, is a sign of renewed financial crisis. Dr. Carillo's orthodox program, aimed at balancing the budget and halting the flight of capital, depended upon a $900 million long-term loan from Washington, a sum vastly in excess of anything the U.S. was willing to put up. The collapse of his minister's ambitious plans means still another setback for Betancourt's hope of reviving Venezuela's economy and financing liberal reforms.

DESPITE HIS DIFFICULTIES Betancourt is, of course, sympathetic to the Kennedy program; his comment upon it was that "the White House begins to speak a language that has not been heard since the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt." Venezuela's president is an old personal friend of A. A. Berle, Kennedy's chief adviser on Latin American affairs. Betancourt is also highly satisfied with the appointment of Teodoro Moscoso as our next ambassador to Venezuela. Moscoso, the former head of "Operation Bootstrap," and the first Puerto Rican appointed to ambassadorial rank, speaks Spanish as his native language and has an exceptional grasp of Latin American economic problems.

Despite these promising auguries of understanding and good will, Kennedy too must reckon with internal political factors that may adversely affect his Latin American program. It is going to be very hard to persuade Congress to provide more money for loans to nations that have squandered so many billions already; Representative Otto Passman of Louisiana, whose subcommittee is now studying the initial request for $500 million, has a long record of successfully cutting down foreign aid appropriations. Venezuela's mineral exports to this country are also under pressure. When Labor Secretary Goldberg visited Hibbing, Minnesota, recently to investigate unemployment there, for example, he was told that "Charity begins at home," and asked what the government intended to do about curbing iron ore imports. President Kennedy has also continued the quota on oil imports. West Virginia coal miners and U.S. oil producers, unlike Venezuelans, can vote and make campaign contributions, and Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson must be kept satisfied. Such pressures as these may force further cutbacks and delays in a program that seems somewhat inadequate to begin with, and the Venezuelan people may not be willing to wait.

The consequences of Betancourt's failure to resolve his domestic difficulties could be very serious. A military dictatorship no longer seems a real possibility, for the Venezuelan people would refuse to work for such a government. But if democratic reform fails in Venezuela, the nation is almost sure to take a sharp turn toward Castroism, and a Fidel Castro in Caracas would make our current troubles with Cuba look petty. Cuban sugar is not, after all, an essential commodity, and because Cuba is an island she can be effectively isolated by the U.S. navy operating out of our bases on the mainland and at Guantanamo. But Venezuela supplies a substantial part of the Western Hemisphere's oil, and two-fifths of U.S. iron ore imports; U.S. businessmen have $3.5 billion invested in the country, three times their former stake in Cuba. From a strategic point of view, Venezuela's impenetrable mountain regions are ideal for Castro-style guerrilla warfare, and her land frontiers border the most impoverished and rebellious regions of Brazil and Colombia. These dark perspectives may seem rather remote, but after observing Fidel Castro's rapid leftward course we cannot ignore the possibility of the same thing happening in countries like Venezuela that suffer from the same social ills that bedeviled pre-1958 Cuba.

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FOUR LETTERS FROM THE WARSAW GHETTO

Halina Szwambaum died in the Warsaw Ghetto in April 1943, fighting alongside her lover in the final unsuccessful uprising of the seventy thousand. Born in Warsaw, the only child of cultivated, middle-class parents, she was brought up by her father, a Polish patriot, to love her native city. But the Germans came and reminded them they were Jews, herding the family into the Ghetto. There her mother died first, then her father, and then Halina, at the age of twenty-two.

Halina managed to keep in constant touch with her woman friend and former teacher, Stefania Liliental, and when their secret meetings at an appointed spot by the Ghetto walls had to be given up, they exchanged letters which were delivered by underground channels. The four letters from Halina that were preserved are printed below (they appeared in the Polish weekly, Swiat, *October 23, 1960). The translation of the letters from the Polish was done by Barbara Vedder.*

June 9, 1941

My dear friend,

For several weeks now my heart has been filled with longing and guilt, until at last I feel that I must talk with you. It's not really the lack of time that has kept me from writing—one can always find a free half hour during the day—but somehow I didn't want to "squeeze you in" between chores. . . . It's not right to do this with real friends, for the time devoted to them should also be a source of happiness. And so, since I am now seated in an armchair on my balcony, surrounded by flower pots blooming with sunflowers and beans, as in a green arbor, I am very glad that I can write to you at last, although at the same time I am sad. I don't quite know how to say it, but I've only just come to realize how much I miss you and how dear you are to me. It is somehow surprising, even for me, this longing for you which sometimes takes hold of me, and this horrible helplessness of ours. In addition, I am now so overworked and tired that I have little energy for keeping our rendezvous; on Tuesday mornings it is difficult for me to find a free fifteen minutes at the appointed hour, and even a visit to Mrs. E.'s for news is a problem. Not because I don't care—you believe me, don't you? There is an expression, not very elegant, that describes my present condition: I've gone completely to pot. The French call it *dégringolade.* I am still studying that beautiful language—my professor would not let himself "be fired" and still comes faithfully, even though he doesn't get paid. This gives me a chance to forget and keeps my "brain muscles" in a more or less flexible condition. Recently I undertook the great task of describing the cathedral of Chartres in French. It filled an entire 50-groszes notebook, consumed quite a few evenings, and kept my mind busy, which is a good thing. But it will be a long time before I have the strength for another such escapade.

My present occupation, about which you asked, takes several hours of my day. I go around to different apartments, up and down many flights of stairs, with a heavy briefcase. For this I need a great deal of physical strength and the patience of an angel. I don't know where either one of these comes from. But they seem to come, and my "business" is prospering. I myself am losing weight—but some people say that

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I look very well and perhaps they're right. I eat almost adequately, which means, in comparison with others, wonderfully well; better than you, I am sure, and that thought often worries me. Many people here make use of the community kitchens (70 gr. for a plate of soup); I do, too, which greatly helps my budget. Keeping house takes up quite a bit of my time, although lately I have become a rather broadminded housekeeper—I simply haven't the strength to go in for any exaggerated floor polishing "beyond the point of exhaustion." . . . I read very little, and only in French. I have no patience for Polish books, but the French I treat as "classwork," which somehow makes it easier. I read only the classics: Balzac, Molière, etc., and I've developed quite a taste for them. It seems to me that one must have a certain maturity and experience to appreciate them, because I can't imagine that two years ago I could so fully have realized the greatness of Molière as I do now—I would probably have thought him dull. And there is another thing I'm doing, though I don't admit it to many people: I am continuing my studies of the history of art under the direction of a good friend of mine, an expert on these matters. I am now up to 15th-century France and in the midst of the "primitives." I do my best to keep it up since, aside from the French, this is the only contact with learning left to me.

I have written all this about myself, and yet it is not what I meant to talk about. I wanted to tell you about my state of mind, how very tired I am, how heavy my heart is all the time. Recently I went through a rather foolish affair, something of a disappointment in love, which also depressed me, although actually it was not unexpected, and nothing serious, really. I would like to walk over your way, to rest from the people I have to live with, and from all that is happening here, but I don't know whether I can find two free days or enough money to live on away from home. Basia R.'s husband once told me that I might sleep at their house, but I don't know whether I could take advantage of the offer now. Anyway, I don't have their address, and I'm not even sure if they are still in Warsaw. I will try to keep our rendezvous next Tuesday—then we can talk. Now I guess I'll close—I've rambled on long enough. I miss your sofa with its soft pillows, where little Witus used to scramble about; I cannot believe I will never see that apartment again. And sometimes it all seems so remote as, for example, the time when you taught me Greek. It was long ago, wasn't it? I don't remember Greek at all any more, even though I used to read Xenophon and Homer. Life was better then than it is now, though you, for instance, did not yet have Witus. So, on the other hand, perhaps it was worse. Well, it's no use philosophizing. Our individual suffering, no matter how painful, isn't really important in view of History—History which now walks the streets. We are unhappy, we are tired, Witus doesn't get butter, we don't have enough soup, but then every adult and every child in all Europe, almost, is not eating enough. Will Witus's generation believe us when we tell them about the terrible things we experienced?

I want to ask you to please send me as many of the cute "sayings" of your little one as possible. I long to hear them, and they are very popular around here. How is the shoe factory? Are you very tired? Has your income improved? I want to know everything.

I send you many affectionate kisses, and I hug the little one with all my strength. I beg you for letters!

HALINA

* * *

October 20, 1941

My dear Mrs. Liliental,

My conscience is so heavy with guilt, I really don't know if I should begin by thanking you or by begging forgiveness. Anyway, I love you very, very much, and when I received the books you sent I was so touched and felt so lonesome for you that I could barely hold back the tears. And yet, I am on such a constant treadmill that up to now I couldn't find even a moment to write you a few words. Several days ago I visited Mrs. E., to get the latest news, and this finally inspired me to write. I am terribly worried about your sore hands and feet. . . . I heard about your new plans for the winter: so you are going back to what you did early in the war. Well, I am glad that at least the Royal Infant and his Mother will be warm—that's important. As for me, I am very rich: I have a little bit of coal, a little wood, and a great

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deal of natural warmth . . . and anyway, I'm always in motion. I do want to tell you something about my life, how I spend my days and weeks, though it will not be easy. I have already given you an over-all picture, but did I describe my everyday existence? It is not only a struggle for survival, literally of "life and death," but something quite unique, unique in its ugliness, in its drabness, in a kind of tragic comedy; it is a masquerade, impossible to put on canvas, and which no writer could ever imagine. And so I believe that after all, it has a certain value, and it seems to me that in the future, when I make an accounting of the good and the bad experiences, in the sum total of everything suffered during this war, I will have to deduct whatever contains certain positive moral values. Every generation, every society, must undergo its quota of unhappiness, and so I don't see why I should consider myself particularly unfortunate to be doing my share of suffering in the Warsaw Ghetto during this war. This is what fate dealt out to me; apparently I was meant to observe life from this particular vantage point. It's as simple as that. But enough of philosophizing about life in the ghetto. It seems to me that my philosophy changes with each letter, but it doesn't matter. You are the only person to whom I write, to whom I like to write and, as you say, my letters have a certain "archive" value. In any case, it's an interesting study: the evolution that takes place in a female on a reservation of the vanishing Semitic tribe in Central Europe. If this turns out to be a thirty year's war, as happened before in Germany, there will be left perhaps only two or three living exponents of this tribe—people will come to look at them for a fee.

But let's get back to reality: I work for endless hours each day, and meet new people all the time. I'm becoming more and more independent, more and more sure of myself. In the mornings, until 1 P.M., I am the "lady from the library," since people come to see me; between 1 P.M. and 9 P.M. I am the "girl from the library," since I run around town; in the evenings I am a bookkeeper, bookbinder, and a businesswoman, and at night, sometimes, a student again. I have little time to think, or to worry. Problems of wider social importance don't touch me at all, I'm separated from the world not only by the ghetto walls, but by the entire setup of my present life. Krakowskie Przedmiescie [a Warsaw street] is as far away as the Champs Elysées or the Piazza San Marco. Recently I studied the Polish Renaissance, as the last chapter of the general history of the Renaissance. I had the feeling that Warsaw's Old Town Square was somewhere at the end of the world, and only the memory of the narrow, colorful houses helped me to realize that it actually exists. During the past month, my "professor" and I made several "trips" to Italy. We visited Siena, Pisa, Bologna, and Venice. Soon I shall be going to Florence for an extended visit. You asked me, once, what I intend to do after the war with my "brain capital": take advantage of it, of course! This will be exactly the starting point for my future studies, and I look forward to it so much. I know a lot already and I "see" even more, which is particularly helpful in this "branch of learning." The ability to evaluate certain things independently is more important than the actual knowledge of facts in the history of art. During these past two years I've written several works that could be Ph.D. dissertations as far as their length is concerned. And I have started doing translations from the French. I've already translated a little book on the French "primitives," and a friend of mine who happens to be a student of Polish literature is helping me edit it. I would like to do a lot of this sort of thing, so that in the future I can become "the ambassador of French scholarly literature in the field of aesthetics"—like Boy Zelenski [Polish writer and art critic]. And I am still studying French. So much for "bragging," now a little about others. Elsa asked me again to give you her regards. She is very brave—she works in a slipper factory for twelve hours a day to earn 6.50 zlotys and two plates of soup. She looks funny, like a Komsomol girl, but nice. Irka had typhus. We went through a very bad time with her for a while, but it all ended beautifully. For that matter, typhus is a whole separate chapter in our ghetto epic: it has become a rather familiar and commonplace phenomenon. It's no longer a bogeyman. We have gotten used to it and don't dread it so much any more. Nobody avoids the sickrooms any longer, people nurse one another, every child is as familiar with the progress of the disease as he is with

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the five fingers of his little hand, and every inhabitant of our "country" is a silent accountant for some of his loved ones: how many more days? Because it is a mathematical kind of disease—fourteen days. As soon as you catch your breath after one crisis is over, someone else falls sick, and again the counting begins. Generally everything ends well, except once in a while we hear news, relayed from mouth to mouth, that somebody young and strong, someone's son, someone's only daughter—yet they took such care. . . . On the other hand, those who do recover, the so-called "post-typhus," are a class unto themselves. They really have a heyday! They can visit the Bazaar as often as they like (at the Bazaar one doesn't buy, it's too crowded), they can ride the bus, which we call "the house of the louse," they can forget about counting to fourteen, and when they are bitten by a bug, it's as if they were made of steel. Sometimes they even feel hurt—nobody takes care of them any more or worries about them: you have a fever, a cold, a headache?—take an aspirin; that's how it will be for you for the next thirty years!

The above was for the archives. Now for you: we bought Sigrid Undset's *The Bridal Wreath* so we already have the entire *Kristin Lavrensdatter*. It always makes me very happy to be able to circulate a worthwhile book, since it's the only form of unspoiled "nourishment for the soul" that can be given to our unfortunate, abused people. We are now completing our collection of Proust. Someone with a collector's bug ought to open a bookshop in the ghetto. We have almost all the items mentioned on the slip I sent you.

I have written so much, and yet I feel that something is incomplete. Perhaps I wanted to talk about little Witus? But how can I, if I never see him and am not able to see him? I want to know a lot about him—what he says, what he does, how he plays. And how are his "gooey" fingers? I beg you, give me many, many details about him. But I know that you will. I wait impatiently for news—for a long letter. It's 8 P.M.—I have barely time to take this letter to Mrs. Edzia.

I kiss you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you again, and I beg you for letters and news.

HALINA

January 11, 1942

My dearest friend,

For the first time this year I have managed to steal a little time, a little space in an empty room, and a little daylight so that I can write a few words to you again. It must be half a century since I last wrote. Days and months fly by so quickly as to suggest the horrifying thought of a steadily approaching "liberation"—eternal rather than temporal, since it is the only one we can be certain of. Anyway, the general feeling around here is that "those who survive, will be free; those who die, are free already." After they confiscated our fur collars and muffs, this feeling took on a deeper meaning. When the temperature is below freezing, we are happy that "they" are also cold. In the year 1943, one freezing January day, two Jews meet on the Chlodna Street bridge —two last Mohicans of the Semitic race in Warsaw. One lives in the northern, the other in the southern part of the ghetto—all the other members of their faith are dead. Both are naked, except for yellow arm bands: "How 'they' must be freezing today!" says one to the other.—Such is the mood here. I wonder what is being said "on the other side." I am terribly sad that I can't see you. Somehow it always turns out to be impossible, and I'm afraid that the only meeting place we have will be taken away, and then I just don't know when we will meet again. I see Mrs. Edzia quite often and get more or less regular information through her. I hear such superlatives about little Witus, who is now almost three, but I don't know when I shall ever see him! I would like so much to have a letter from you again—secondhand information never has enough of the details.

The cold weather is very hard on me, for I spend most of the day on the street. I'm glad that one-third of January is over already. A long winter is too difficult to endure under our conditions. If you could only see these barefooted children on the streets!

I meet the same beggars week after week, and I cannot help wondering how some of them have managed to keep alive, why they haven't caught pneumonia, how they continue to walk around on feet swollen with pus, frozen. Yet in this nightmare there is a kind of pathos—there ought to be a composer to write a macabre sym-

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phony of the ghetto. The streets of the ghetto sing a horrible, but wildly colorful tune—one has to know how to listen. Every beggar, every vendor has his own song, interrupted and unchanged for long months at a stretch. Then there is the steady accompaniment of the footsteps of the passing crowd. Now it is the crunching of snow, now the slushing of mud, or the rhythmical pounding on the pavement. Depending on the weather. And over all this, the dominating noise of traffic, the symphonic fortissimo. A few days ago, at 7 P.M., I stood at the corner of Pawia and Zamenhoff, to look and listen to the street. Along the sidewalk stood rows of vendors selling candles and cigarettes, many of them children yelling *"laicht, laicht,"* each trying to outshout the others, each in a different tone, making a strange melody. The burning candles flickered in the dark, and threw a dirty yellow light on the walls and pavement, clashing with the whiteness of the snow that gleamed despite the blackness of the night. And everywhere the silent, thick crowd, churning, churning in the dark. Just like a Goya painting. There is some kind of morbid lyricism in this life of ours.

Apropos of poetry—have you read a poem sent from America by Tuwim,* called "Flowers"? It has been circulated here for some weeks. It is a beautiful epic, of a completely novel and unexpected quality, although only fragments of it have reached us so far. If you don't know it, I can copy it for you so you can read it and pass it along. Last night we organized a "Tuwim evening." There were about ten of us, and we recited Tuwim's poems from his earliest to the most recent. "Flowers" is his crowning achievement. It's really a beautiful poem.

Besides poetry there was also something for the body—the hostess treated us to a "crutch" (a leg of lamb made of bacon strips, for want of an honest-to-goodness roast). My social life is a very rich one. I have met endless numbers of interesting people, and my house is always full of "guests." I was never particularly social, never had too many acquaintances, or even friends, but now, during the war, all that has changed. I don't know how to account for it, but I find it neither unpleasant nor unnatural. This way I find it much easier to endure what must be endured. Otherwise, I would not be able to stand it. The worst thing of all is the home, family life, living conditions. I live in a walk-through room—it's like living in a bus. Not only do people buzz around countless times per minute, but they push through the doors all at once, as if they were entering the "metro." It's simply disgusting! I don't think I can stand it any longer. Crowding is even worse than hunger—or am I wrong? We all suffer from a hunger for "space." I've become extremely sensitive to landscape—both described and painted. On my walls I have hung postcards of landscapes by Corot, Sisley, Monet, and I never tire of looking at them. Anything green moves me deeply. I daydream of grass—to be able to lie in it—of a meadow, of trees, of a forest. Once I dreamed about the sea, but that was an unpleasant dream.

Well, enough for today. It's growing dark. I shall write again soon. Greetings to Genia. I kiss you very affectionately and await your letter.

HALINA

* * *

June 25, 1942

My dearest Mrs. Liliental,

Thank you for your letter, you are very sweet—it's funny that we both feel guilty, and write to each other about the same things. As I hadn't heard from you in a long time, when they brought me the envelope with your handwriting on it, I suddenly felt how much I have missed this assurance that someone is thinking of me, even though that someone is so far away and has so many worries of her own. During these recent months I have been thinking of you the way prisoners or emigrants might think of their dear ones who stayed behind in their native country. I wish I could walk out of here and go to you, to Warsaw. I would stroll down Bielanska Street, through the Theater Square, across Foch and down Nowy Swiat, then straight on and on to the Place of Three Crosses and Aleje Ujazdowskie. I would walk very slowly, breathing in the summer air, the greenness of the leaves and the grass of Lazienki Park—I would fill my lungs with it. There would be so much

* Julian Tuwim, a Jew and one of the major modern Polish poets. He had managed to get to America, but after the war he returned to Poland, where he died several years ago.

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space around me, so much sky over my head! Maybe I would take the Agrykola Road down to the pond to look at the statue of King Sobieski and the Lazienki Palace. This was the Warsaw of the old days, when one could go to the Polski Theater to see *November Nights* and later, at midnight, wander down toward the gates of the park. How quiet and peaceful it must be now! I no longer seem to have a memory for sound, for I can't quite imagine that silence. My ears are filled with the deafening clamor of crowded streets and cries of people dying on the sidewalks. Even the quiet hours of the night are filled with the snoring and coughing of those who share the same apartment or, only too often, with the shots and screams coming from the street! But why am I back in the ghetto? Here is the best proof that one cannot escape it. . . . A moment ago I was in Lazienki Park. Now I walk over to Mokotow. Your apartment is locked up and, oh, horror, not a sign of its inhabitants! But I see there's a note on the door: "We've gone to the country." You and Witus are in a green meadow. I would lie down, on my back, in the grass; nobody would understand why I was crying at the sight of the blue sky over my head.

Will I ever again in my life see the Vistula River? No one can imagine how much it is possible to love this river; and how one must rack one's brains to recall exactly how it looks. Because after a while one starts to forget. Just as we forget the features or the voices of the dead, no matter how profoundly we may miss them.

One day a "prison mate" asked me: "Do you still remember a forest?" At once I began to imagine a dry, warm day on the suburban "line" and the woods all around —tall pines with smooth, brown trunks and branches spreading at the top like umbrellas. And walking over slippery pine needles, over moss and heather; everything dry, everything crunching underfoot. Since then, since that question, I can find no peace. I want to go to the country and be in a pine forest so much that I can't stop thinking about it, and I'm afraid that I may develop some kind of "forest complex." Once I tried to explain a pine cone to a six-year-old boy, but I could not convince him that it was an ordinary "fruit of the evergreen tree." He didn't know what it looked like, so finally I made him plant some beans in a flowerpot. The little fellow planted a few seeds, watered them carefully, observed the green leaves, and now he knows what nature is! He even saw a tree growing in the back yard of a friend's house. No wonder he doesn't remember pine cones—he was still so little "before the war." But now there is awakening in him a love of nature—perhaps an inheritance from his shepherd and farmer ancestors of the great King Solomon's era.

All our children are growing plants. In flowerpots, in boxes, on balconies, on window sills, everywhere sprout beans, peas, nasturtium, marigolds, reseda, and clover. Visiting friends, one immediately sees, along the window, flowerpots with various green things sprouting—"How well your plants are doing! It's much worse at our place, we have no sunlight." But the plants are kind—somehow they grow, even without sunlight! They stretch their little heads toward the light, grow sideways, but keep on growing—to spite the whole world. We have best luck with clover, and even better with weeds. I, therefore, specialize in weeds. Last year they prospered so well that they grew taller than the gardener. My balcony, though not sunny, looks like a real garden. Flowerpots, window boxes, a lot of greenery, a lot of hope for flowers. My greatest joy are the sweet peas —the first little white flower opened yesterday.

To create a summer-villa atmosphere, I placed a brick and a stone among the flowerpots—that brings in an architectural element—*brique et pierre*—symbol of French architecture. I also have a view of the steeple of a neo-Gothic Lutheran church, and a tiny bit of open sky. It all fits together—the poor man's garden and Gothic.

My education has now dropped down to the very bottom of the list of my many daily duties, so it seems that "after the war" I may not be quite so smart as my earlier efforts suggested. If I had time, I would study botany, because "later" I want to have my own garden on the outskirts of Warsaw. Only now I really don't know if on this mortal coil there will ever be found the *fuori le mure.*

More and more often at social gatherings we talk about life after death. That doesn't mean that I have become excessively

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pessimistic—oh, no—but it is necessary to be prepared for the day when we shall have to admit that we have been defeated and must go to be gathered to Abraham's bosom. I wonder to whose bosom the Aryans are gathered? It won't be such a terrible thing, after all, only no one is in a great hurry to go, especially since it's hard to tell how it really is over there. Very often now my mind is filled with figures—the merciless death statistics: 5,000 a month, 50,000 last year. In other words, we are all in the waiting line on which—oh, wonder—everyone wants to be as far back as possible, because—who can tell—maybe the receiving window will be shut right before *his* nose! That is: maybe he will manage not to die before the end of the war. And then . . . then there will be *aurea aetas,* heaven on earth, and all Jews will be very, very happy. In the meantime, we live in constant fear, owing to persistent rumors about the approaching end for the children of Israel. We await some great calamity, some huge storm which is supposed to sweep us from the face of the earth, forever. I don't know why all this has come up just now. In fact, however, it is our destiny to await destruction.

Fortunately (or perhaps unfortunately, we will see), as I've written you before, I'm in love. And so my mind is preoccupied with such important things that I cannot very well worry about all the Jews, too. This one Jew gives me enough worry. I have no time to see him and, what is worse, no place to see him. The best guardian of morality in the ghetto is the housing situation. We even had a play here called *Love Is Looking for an Apartment.* We meet hurriedly, sometimes at dinner in the community kitchens, or sometimes, just before 9 P.M., I drop in to his place for five minutes to say "good night," only to hear some rough words from the policemen later on. Wanda Milner is a realist and takes life simply: she has become "officially engaged" to some young punk and is waiting for the war to end. In the meantime she has a "fiancé" and is terribly proud of it. Irka and R. work in the "shops" twelve hours a day for room and board and one or two zlotys. Elsa would like very much to write to you, but she sleeps every moment that she's not working. Actually, this news of our school friends may be quite outdated. You may readily imagine how often we see each other, since it takes me forty-five minutes to get to Wanda's and we both work an endless number of hours. Several times a year our various birthdays come around. Then we arrange to meet, though often we finally don't show up. We get news of each other secondhand, from people we happen to meet on the street. Luckily we have friends in common. Occasionally one of us gets lonely for the other, or has something particularly important to tell her. Then we come and spend the night.

HALINA

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PHILIP GREEN

NATIONAL PURPOSE & NEW FRONTIERS

DURING THE LAST few years of the Eisenhower administration, many leaders of public opinion in this country became aware that American life was in the grip of a malaise so profound that it might almost be described as the central fact of our social order. The growth of this new awareness among some of our most influential public figures represented a striking change from the tolerance, and even approval, that they themselves had originally extended to the indolence which Eisenhower manifested in the face of pressing domestic social problems—an approval apparently grounded in the belief that nothing must be allowed to interfere with the President's historic mission of making internationalism a meaningful ideal both to the Republican party and the American people generally. It was, I think, the tremendous shock administered by the first Sputnik which finally convinced most of these men that, despite his best intentions and their highest hopes, Eisenhower was going to leave office without having succeeded in that mission. Sputnik, by dramatizing the inadequacy of American progress in the most obviously critical area of all, helped make it clear to them that our attitudes and our behavior in the realm of international affairs are inextricably bound up with our domestic situation, and that apathetic withdrawal is a contagious disease which cannot be confined to a single sphere of public activity.

The uneasiness over the state of American society that is today felt in almost every quarter was first given expression in several speeches by Adlai Stevenson and George Kennan, and then in J. K. Galbraith's *The Affluent Society*. The excited discussion which followed upon *The Affluent Society* (and the reports by the Rockefeller Brothers and the Gaither Committee) became, in 1960, an extended public debate. The symposium on "National Purpose" sponsored jointly by the New York *Times* and *Life* magazine,* the *Report of the President's Commission on National Goals*† (a token of Eisenhower's recognition of the disintegration around him), and the campaign addresses of John F. Kennedy (as well as occasional speeches by Stevenson, Nelson Rockefeller, and once or twice even Richard Nixon), were all products of the same debate; they all, furthermore, were characterized by one quality in particular—the emphasis on "National Purpose" as a perspective

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* *The National Purpose*, by John K. Jessup, Adlai Stevenson, Archibald MacLeish, David Sarnoff, Billy Graham, John W. Gardner, Clinton Rossiter, Albert Wohlstetter, James Reston, and Walter Lippmann (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 146 pp., $2.95).

† *Goals for Americans* (Prentice-Hall, 372 pp., $1.00).

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from which American society could most usefully be viewed.

That view is largely a critical one, stressing the disabilities we are put under, on the cold war battleground, by our shortcomings in the domestic sphere. Almost all the contributions to the "Great Debate" of 1960 (including the essays from which the Report of the President's Commission was abstracted) are forthright and even forceful, but the articles in the "National Purpose" collection are the most outspoken, with their forays against the conformity and the selfishness of an affluent citizenry, and their continual reference to George Kennan's statement that a nation as undisciplined and purposeless as ours cannot compete successfully with Soviet Russia.

DESPITE THEIR FORTHRIGHT tone, however, none of the persons or groups who carried on the "Great Debate" really has a very searching analysis to make of American society; they are merely uneasy and occasionally waspish, and they tend to look at all questions in terms of immediate (and superficial) cold war gains. (Their writings are hampered, moreover, by the difficulty inherent in the very concept of national purpose, which, as we shall see, does not easily lend itself to concrete definition.) By contrast, in a recent and less publicized tract which appeared at the height of the "Great Debate,"* Hans J. Morgenthau (long a respected scholar in the field of international politics) deals trenchantly and at length with the crucial flaws in the fabric of American society, the defective nature of the relationship between the people and their government, and the consequences of this situation for America's world position.

Morgenthau's idea—to state it bluntly—is that the American people in the mass today lack any sense of common responsibility for the organization and improvement of their society. Except when they function as members of interest groups which treat the national government (with its willing compliance) as an exploitable service agency, they are alienated from that government. As an institution for the expression of their common purposes, therefore, it has become meaningless—a concentration of power that for the average man makes all attempts at intimate contact or productive control absurd. Nor can that meaning which national institutions fail to give to social existence be found in the more limited private institutions of our society; often they, too, completely overwhelm the individual. In this connection, Morgenthau discusses mainly the giant corporations and the big labor unions, which are the most obvious examples of private combinations of oligarchic power. But I think it is true even on the lowest levels of voluntary association that the individual is becoming less and less a force, the organization more and more of one (the *organization,* the abstract machine; not the *community,* a word with more humane connotations). Though many of our private institutions—particularly the ones concerned with the production of goods and services—are extolled by those who benefit from them, none of them are *believed in* or *identified with* to any extent; a positive attitude toward them lasts only so long as they continue to serve individual economic interests. Behind the façade of extreme organization, that is, lies a reality of anti-social individualism, which is further masked by the protective tyranny of public opinion. And the function of this tyranny today is still what Tocqueville said it was 130 years ago—to hide the fact that each person is pursuing his own private interest and is, moreover, tacitly expected to do nothing more than that.

Inevitably, the cynicism bred by this situation expresses itself in popular atti-

* *The Purpose of American Politics* (Knopf, 359 pp., $4.50); this book may be read almost as a campaign document for John F. Kennedy, considering its emphasis on "New Frontiers" (a phrase originating with the Rockefeller Brothers reports) and public purpose.

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tudes toward our participation in international affairs. For of all the activities which the national government pursues, its overseas policies in peacetime have the least visible effect on the private concerns of individuals, except in pecuniary terms irrelevant to the basic purposes of these policies. Thus when government is viewed as merely a focal point for interest-group mendicancy, the foreign policies of the nation must suffer from apathetic neglect, and from the consequent pressure of uninformed and therefore negative public opinion which is so destructive in this field of action. A people with no constant dedication to public affairs at home will hardly feel such dedication to affairs abroad; a people who subject their local institutions to every passing manifestation of public mood will hardly develop rational long-range policies abroad. To the extent, that is, that the American people are alienated from the institutions of government at home, to that extent and more will they be alienated from their government's purposes abroad. They suffer its activities to continue, but in as limited a manner as is manifestly possible. In critical moments when war threatens they may be stirred to momentary, though usually irrational, enthusiasm for action, demanding "total" solutions of a type usually denied us by considerations of international politics. But the kind of planned, permanent, generous participation in international life, which offers our only chance for avoiding a long series of nuclear showdowns, commands almost no mass support. For the people's consciences are rarely touched, their beliefs are rarely excited, their deepest energies are almost never engaged.*

* The excitement touched off by President Kennedy's creation of a "Peace Corps" may signalize a reversal of form in this regard. But I doubt it; it is much more likely that he is simply reclaiming that minority of the citizenry which in any generation is expected to have an idealistic interest in public life, and which had been temporarily estranged by eight years of Eisenhowerism. This is an accomplishment, of course, but not a basic one in any long-range sense.

II

IT FOLLOWS FROM Morgenthau's analysis (though he himself, as we shall see, shies away from the conclusion) that American society as it is presently constituted is incapable of acting in accord with an ideal common purpose. This is what makes the notion of a committee to report to the President on "national goals" so absurd, and it is therefore no surprise that the document which was finally produced should have been almost completely worthless. Taken together, it must be acknowledged, the individual essays from which the Commission's report was abstracted offer a fairly accurate picture of current social trends and problems. But like the report itself, the essays (with the exception of one by Clark Kerr and one by Herbert Stein and Edward Denison) almost seem to have been written in order to inhibit tough-minded thought and action.

As for the *Life*-New York *Times* National Purpose symposium, its general quality is reminiscent of one of the less inspirational sights of 1960: the steady parade before the appropriate Senate subcommittees of the leading members of our conservative elite—investment bankers, corporation presidents, etc.—to urge that the American people "tighten their belts" . . . after which they took off in their company planes, on their company expense accounts. Very few of the contributors to the National Purpose symposium are quite so self-righteous as this, but scarcely more than two or three of them are notable for exemplifying that life of sacrifice to common goals which they all seem to think should be embraced by the average apathetic citizen. Furthermore, none of the moderates and liberals who are promoting this idea of sacrifice for the common good would consider for an instant the prospect of making the radical changes in some of our basic institutions that would be necessary to create the new way of life which their criticism seems to demand.

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The concept of national purpose, in fact, supplies a perfect means of criticizing American shortcomings while evading a recognition of the fact that these shortcomings are rooted in fundamental institutional structures. Thus most of the definitions that have been proposed of the "American purpose"—self-government under natural law; the words of the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the Constitution; expansion of the domain of peace and freedom; the extension of "equality in freedom," or equal opportunitiy—are remarkably abstract. While such definitions (of which the one depending on the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution is undoubtedly the most realistic) may on occasion provide a general moral or political tone against which the direction of concrete policy may be tested, they are hardly useful for the more urgent needs to which the various writers have addressed themselves—not to speak of the way they gloss over the social conflicts within our system which hinder the development of anything like a common national purpose. When the oratorical fog that surrounds such words as "peace," "freedom," and "equality" drifts away, we are left with a hard core of concrete questions that cannot be begged: What kind of "freedom," for instance? For whom? At the cost of what other freedoms? To be achieved by what means? Merely to attempt an answer to such questions with regard to America immediately discloses the existence of those real social conflicts which the national purpose critics rarely mention and in the presence of which it is impossible to speak of a common purpose animating the nation as a whole.

The difficulty is that individuals and groups have goals to which their environment, their lives, and their traditions lead them to aspire; what they do, or what they believably affirm they are trying to do, is their "purpose." But what they talk about abstractly—what they say their purpose ought to be—is irrelevant if it is not either bound up with their concrete actions, or related to those goals which are in actuality promoted by their social institutions. There are innumerable examples of this kind of irrelevancy scattered throughout the recent writings about national purpose; two of the most glaring will suffice to demonstrate the point.

TO THE *Report on National Goals,* Dr. Henry Wriston, the Commission's chairman, has appended a thoughtful essay on the primary place which American ideals afford the value of individual self-fulfillment. A key section of his essay deals, of course, with the problem of race relations and civil rights. On this subject he is moralistic, hard-hitting, and often even angry; the most militant liberal, white or Negro, would find little room for disagreement with his views. Yet this same Dr. Wriston lends his name and his prestige to a report which recommends only that discrimination in *higher* education be ended by 1970 (a date which will probably turn out to be unduly delayed even in Mississippi), and which makes no mention at all of the need to end segregation in *public* education, beyond the remark that "Every state must make progress in good faith toward desegregation of publicly-supported schools." The simple truth is that Dr. Wriston's respect for individual self-fulfillment, while great, has come into conflict with other components of his idea of the national purpose which to him are equally important (such as, presumably, the need for a broad social consensus, limits on federal action, etc.). As a result his fine sentiments become, to say the least, inoperable.

Similarly, the National Purpose symposium includes an essay by Dr. John Gardner, president of the Carnegie Foundation, who exhorts us to exalt the value of excellence in our educational system and other social institutions. Yet nowhere does Dr. Gardner acknowledge that his exhortations are necessary because our institutions (as Tocqueville noted) not only fail to

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promote excellence — except, perhaps, with regard to acquisitiveness—but often actually prescribe mediocrity; he therefore fails to see that those institutions must be changed drastically if his requirements are to be met. He merely asserts that the American people ought to ". . . pursue excellence!"; but to this assertion surely the proper and reasonable response is, "Why?" Unless the answer is, "Because it will be worthwhile to you in terms of your value expectations," it will be pointless. And that is precisely the case here: on the one hand it is clear that under present conditions such an answer would be untrue; and on the other hand the only proposals Dr. Gardner makes for reform (they are listed in his contribution to the Wriston Report) are too mechanical (school redistricting, etc.) to effect the kind of restructuring of our institutions that would create an adequate social incentive for the pursuit of excellence.

This barrier of abstract irrelevance is, I think, an insurmountable one for those who are trying to find a new rallying-point in the idea of national purpose. Of all of them, only Hans Morgenthau has attempted to grapple seriously with the problem, and the nature of his failure to solve it leads one to suspect that it is, in fact, insoluble. Having described the American purpose as a continual effort to extend the domain of "equality in freedom," Morgenthau then attempts to show that this effort has always been central to American history, and that it therefore constitutes a tradition which is still both available and relevant today. This attempt is unsuccessful for a variety of reasons. First, recognizing that the monstrous corporativeness which now so severely limits the possibility of our achieving equal opportunity for all has its roots far back in American social history, Morgenthau is forced for the most part to find the real expression of our democratic heritage not in society itself, but in its *continual physical expansion* (until the 20th century) beyond new geographical frontiers. But this interpretation of American history—which is, I think, identical with President Kennedy's—is tendentious and not in accord with most authoritative contemporary thinking on the subject. The bulk of American historians today agree that the "Frontier Thesis" is substantially incorrect; that insofar as democratic institutions have been improved and extended, it has been through the struggle of opposing social and economic interest groups and classes, *not* through any unifying and "democratic" common purpose in geographical expansion to "new frontiers."*

Furthermore, to find the "national purpose" in expansion, we would also have to find it in the violence which often accompanied that expansion: in the slaughter of the Indians, the aggression against Mexico, the despoiling of the continent itself. In ignoring this side of American history, Morgenthau reveals how weak the basis of his theory is. Obviously, the spreading of "equality in freedom" has not been the only purpose of American expansion, nor even, perhaps, the main one.

SIMILARLY, THE IDEALS espoused not only by Morgenthau but by the other proponents of national purpose and "new frontiers"—dedication to common goals; the use of affluence for social ends; genuine internationalism; the continual strengthening of democratic institutions, etc.—are not necessarily the most accurate statement of the major thrust of traditional American values. It might indeed be argued that the uniquely great accomplishments of the American system are almost without exception "material" rather than "spiritual" and have been achieved through—*not* in spite of—the anti-social individualism, self-aggrandizement, waste, ugliness, and cultural medi-

* See especially the work of Fred Shannon, Benjamin F. Wright, Jr., George W. Pierson, Carleton Hayes, Henry N. Smith, Louis Hacker, and the Schlesingers, father and son. Much of the relevant material is collected in *The Turner Thesis*, edited by George R. Taylor, D. C. Heath and Company, 1949.

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ocrity which the national purpose critics are so confident in calling temporary lapses from the essential traditions of our past.

Even the New Deal—which many of the national purpose critics worship, and which Morgenthau in particular sees as the great creative period in American history because it opened up new "internal frontiers" of social opportunity to compensate for the closing down of the external geographical frontier—scarcely raised the level of public virtue or established a high sense of social responsibility in the nation as a whole. Most of the New Deal's concrete accomplishments turned out to be only props for the material goals of an American culture which would otherwise have disintegrated, and all that is left today institutionally of the New Deal, therefore, are those mass social welfare agencies that must exist in any modern industrial society, whatever its political organization, and in which the United States had till then seriously lagged behind other Western nations.

Our chief (though not our only) inheritance from the New Deal, that is, can plausibly be seen as continuous with our inheritance from the whole mainstream of our history: a desire for economic affluence, no matter how ugly or irrational, and helpless acceptance of the inhuman scale of our organized concentrations of power —both of which are summed up in the growth of a vast impersonal corporatism, building on, though not replacing, our individualist ethics and institutions.*

As Clinton Rossiter has correctly pointed out in the best of the National Purpose essays, this corporatism is no substitute for a true sense of community, but rather its enemy. In the aftermath of the New Deal, therefore, our best chance of creating a purposeful American community by the reform of political and economic institutions has been lost; yet it is only such a community which could produce the kind of public virtue and dedication that the advocates of "national purpose" wish to cultivate. In the kind of small-scale freeholding society which was envisaged by those who first gave tongue to our abstract ideals, those ideals might have found content and meaning; as a possible basis for various utopian forms of democratic society, they still represent America's greatest contribution to political thought. But once one accepts (as does Morgenthau, despite his profoundly critical attitude) the organized, corporate, hierarchically-structured nature of modern capitalism, the utility of such social myths vanishes. As Morgenthau himself points out, who can be truly "free" or "equal" vis-à-vis General Motors, or the modern quasi-garrison state? When "equality" and "freedom," moreover, are reduced to "social mobility" —which means the opportunity of men to battle freely *with each other,* rather than to battle together and on equal terms against nature—then they promote the most selfish forms of individualism, and so not only accentuate the strains and tensions of modern life, but directly contradict the notion of a common purpose for society.

III

THOUGH THE DISCUSSION of national purpose has (with the exceptions noted) lacked real seriousness, and has contributed very little to our understanding of the American malaise—or to our notions of what can be done in the way of remedy—it has managed to serve as the rallying-point of a new political alignment. On one side—more united in fact than ever before, regardless of party label—are those who have taken heed of

* David Riesman's "other-directed" man is the inhabitant of our corporate society, but it would be a mistake to imagine that he is any less individualistic in the peculiar American interpretation of that word—i.e., anti-social, non-communally oriented—than were his forebears. Other-directedness is simply the individualism of those who have something to protect rather than something to gain; what is lacking today is not the individualism of "inner-directed man," that is, but merely his willingness to take personal risks.

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the critical barrage and who have espoused the idea that a sense of national purpose can only be reawakened through the development of "new frontiers." In other words, this group (led, of course, by Kennedy and the men around him) favors a dynamic program of social reform at home combined with an "enlightened" power-oriented approach to world politics. On the other side are the new isolationists, now led by Barry Goldwater, the believers in the old doctrine of "Fortress America." And in the middle, as always, are the moderates, led by Richard Nixon, who often support policies based on some concept of national purpose, but who at the same time often share the frustrated mood of the right.

The nature of this new alignment creates a crucial problem for political leadership. Though the supporters of "Fortress America" have gained influence in recent years, it is difficult to conceive of their actually attaining power, for the simple reason that their ideal is today almost completely—and deservedly—without intellectual respectability, not only among our leading educators and scholars, but even among our purveyors of popular opinion and culture. The new isolationism might perhaps have much to recommend it in moral terms at least if it stood for an ideal similar to that, say, of the late Charles Beard: the self-protection and nurturing of a humane society, rebuilding and renewing itself as an example for the rest of the world to follow, uncorrupted by the arms races and power alliances of the Old World. But even most of those who once espoused that ideal have written it off as a dream, and in any event it is *not* the ideal of "Fortress America." For the new isolationists have stood the old isolationism on its head: whenever an international problem seems to threaten our security they invariably propose not utopian withdrawal, but "elimination" of the problem by decisive, almost spasmodic military action; their clear preference is in fact for a world in which all power opposed to ours has been forcibly destroyed by us. Thus "Fortress America" today means almost certainly an America armed to the teeth, and continually rearming itself as this year's stable deterrent becomes next year's unstable provocation—a garrison state, obsessed with problems of mobilization and indifferent to questions of social welfare.

Nevertheless, the prevailing mood of the mass public is clearly closer to the mood of isolationism than to that of the national purpose group, and shows little prospect of changing in the near future. This means that the advocates of national purpose, except when they rely on a jingoistic appeal as in the Cuban situation, are likely to fail in their attempt to galvanize the apathetic public (Kennedy's evident difficulty with the 87th Congress is an early portent), and so in the long run their strategy will probably turn out to be no more viable as a basis for the maintenance of democratic ideals at home and abroad than is the concept of "Fortress America."

THE NATIONAL PURPOSE critics themselves are usually so caught (not without reason, in the context of the 20th century) by fear of what the state can do that they hesitate to recommend drastic action of any kind. (In general today, when radical social criticism is once more becoming respectable, it rarely inspires an impulse to radical political *action* among the critics themselves, let alone the people as a whole.) Morgenthau, for example, is so torn between his knowledge that the weak state cannot check private concentrations of power, and his fear that a strong state would do so only too well, that he is unable ultimately to choose between the two. Thus he bogs down dangerously close to the platitudinous level of the President's Commission whenever he confronts the need for policy recommendations. It is difficult to say exactly what the kind of government he finally proposes—a sort of super-regulatory agency dedicated to

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"keeping open the channels of mobility" —would look like; but the most probable result of this type of balancing act in the present context is that the trend toward the complete corporate state would merely be hastened, the end product being perhaps a little more efficient and humane than the present version, but with no more true communality of purpose, and with no more likelihood of mobilizing the public for responsible action in foreign affairs.

We are likely, then, to go on the way we are now, stumbling toward the corporate society; never subduing for long the acquisitiveness of private interests; never presenting for long a coherent and consistent national image and policy to the rest of the world. A strong government may halt the trend for a while, may raise the level of public performance and may function in such a way as to enlarge or preserve the diminishing sphere of genuine democracy in our society. And certainly our governors should always have some image of democratic purpose—that is to say, some higher ideal —in mind when they appeal to the people for their support. But—and this is the crucial point—if that appeal is made in terms of national unity (which seems to be how the Kennedy administration has been using the idea of national purpose), it will fail to muster support for programs that deal boldly with pressing social or economic needs. Indeed, despite the intentions of men like Morgenthau, Stevenson, and MacLeish, the only practical meaning that can be given to "national purpose" under the circumstances I have been describing is a disciplined, crisis-oriented permanent cold war mobilization, beyond which, as Eisenhower said in his farewell address, lies the garrison state.

It seems obvious that we would do better to ignore those of our opinion leaders who urge us to repress group and class conflict in our society. Freely expressed social conflict is probably the only mechanism through which it is possible to eliminate the conditions of inequality which have made material gain seem so urgent to Americans. Furthermore, an emphasis on the realities of social conflict in America might at last force a general recognition of the fact that in the context of the cold war the twin goals of strengthened democracy at home and increased national power abroad are almost certainly incompatible—a fact which the national purpose critics persistently refuse to admit or even to discuss. Confronted with the hard truth about the interplay between our "national security" policy and our democratic ideals—an interplay in which the latter often suffer to the presumptive advantage of the former—we might *then* set the stage for a really "Great Debate," and for a truly meaningful political realignment.

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LIONEL TRILLING

THE MIND OF ROBERT WARSHOW

ROBERT WARSHOW DIED in the spring of 1955. He was thirty-seven years old. In the circle of his friends the shock of his death was extreme —I have never known a death so intensely and openly grieved over. No one was inclined, in the modern way, to "accept" it. No one was reasonable or philosophical about it. It did not seem a fact in nature but against nature. It was *mourned*: the beautiful lost word, which survives only in the language of newspapers and of psychoanalysis, had, on this occasion, its old availability.

In this primitive directness of feeling, Warshow's youth and the entire unexpectedness of his death played their part. And those who were at all close to Warshow were aware that he died just at the moment when he was beginning to claim a degree of happiness after a period of great pain; just at the moment, too, when his intellectual powers were showing themselves with a new confidence. Yet these circumstances would not have saddened us so greatly had we not set a peculiarly high valuation upon the man himself as he lived, had we not known him to stand for, and to give, things of peculiar worth.

If I try to say what these things are, I must ultimately rely on the body of Warshow's published work. Yet I should like to suggest something of his personal quality. My view of Warshow will be inadequate through lack of sufficient knowledge. I did not know him intimately—it was an element in my own sense of loss that he died only a little while after we discovered that we liked and trusted each other; before that there had been antagonism between us. Other friends, who knew him far better than I did, have talked with me about him, and they have spoken of aspects of his temperament that I had no awareness of. But I am putting aside what they have told me, choosing to speak only of what I actually perceived.

I first met Robert Warshow at the time when, on the invitation of my old friend Elliot Cohen, he joined the staff of COMMENTARY. I recall him as a slim, rather tall young man of wry, quiet, prepossessing manner. He spoke in a voice that even now, in my recollection of its flatness and dryness, seems to me of the rural Middle West, although in fact he was reared in New York, in a Jewish family of the middle class. He attended the University of Michigan, but I can scarcely think that he had picked up a regional tone there—the quality of his speech must have been only idiosyncratic, an expression of his temperament, and certainly his speaking voice was consonant with, I might almost say definitive of, his personal style in general, which was one of avowed *plainness,* of an insistence, gravely and quietly made, upon

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actuality. Some English writers have lately taken to comparing the intellectual temperament of the provinces with that of the metropolis, all to the advantage of the former. They describe it as naturally inclined to seriousness, as stubborn in dissidence, rooted in the circumstantialities of family and class, undeceived by what in culture is merely chic and graceful. Warshow, for all his metropolitan origins, had something of the temperament of the provinces as thus described, except that he did not have what in England so often goes with it, a degree of dourness and suspiciousness.

Yet for a time I thought him dour and suspicious enough. On our first meeting I must have seen some of the happy charm that I later knew he had, for I invited him to visit me, but on the evening he paid the visit I found him anything but attractive. Although I came to think of him as notable for his social ease, he seemed under more strain than anything in the occasion called for, and even to be hostile, saying little and seeming to direct what he did say to someone or something not in the room. He sat on one of those chairs which consist of a wooden frame with webbing stretched across it, and so hard did he thrust back against it that the frame broke with a loud crack. I remember being annoyed because he was so much more determined than I was not to take any account of the mishap, and so I presume that the reason for the hostility was one of those undefined but powerful antagonisms between members of different literary and cultural generations. These emotions lie outside the province of the historian of culture, and no novelist I know of has ever given them the accurate notice they deserve. They can go very deep and be quite intense. In general, they are set in motion and made overt by the younger man, but no doubt they are reciprocal, and the older man, although it is usually his part to keep them out of his consciousness, probably has feelings as strong as his antagonist's. On both sides it needs considerable grace to compound the difference, or, better, to express it in a way that shall be creditable, and even instructive, to both.

In addition to the unvoiced generational dispute, there was, I believe, another element in Warshow's antagonism. When Elliot Cohen founded Commentary, he had asked me to serve as a member of an advisory board which he wished to organize. This I had refused to do, setting forth my reasons in a letter to Cohen. My earliest published work had appeared in the *Menorah Journal,* of which Cohen had been the managing editor and the presiding genius, and I had served for a time as a member of the editorial staff of the magazine—I had had my experience of the intellectual life lived in reference to what Cohen called the Jewish community, and I had no wish to renew it by associating myself with a Jewish magazine. Whatever such an association was for others, and I could understand that it might be anything from a help to a necessity, for me it could now only be a posture and a falsehood. I cannot speak with anything like certitude about the relation to the Jewish community that Warshow felt he had during his years on Commentary. If I consult my impressions of the time when we were friendly, I should say that it was essentially not very different from my own. That is, he acknowledged, and with pleasure, the effect that a Jewish rearing had had upon his temperament and mind, he was aware of, and perhaps surprised by, his sense of connection with Jews everywhere—and found that the impulses of his intellectual life came from sources that were anything but Jewish, that the chief objects of his thought and feeling were anything but Jewish. At the same time, he had, and thought he should have, a very considerable awareness of the life of "the Jewish community" and a genuine if detached interest in it; and I think that when he began his connection with Commentary he had what Jewish young

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men sometimes do have in the course of their effort to fix their position in the world of culture, the idea of a specifically Jewish culture and a satisfaction in supposing this to be a reality. Elliot Cohen told me that the letter in which I refused to involve myself with COMMENTARY had been read angrily and contemptuously by the young men of his staff; Clement Greenberg, the managing editor, quarrelled with me over it at a party, accusing me of Jewish self-hatred, and we invited each other to step outside but then permitted ourselves to be soothed; and no doubt Warshow shared in the adverse feelings.

The failure of our relations that first evening was consolidated by Warshow's expressed opinion of a novel that I published shortly after. I was uneasy about the book, being aware of all sorts of things that were wrong with it, and of course it was my uneasiness that made me especially sensitive to adverse criticism, but I thought that Warshow was captious and inaccurate in the particular objections he made —I still think so—and I took his review personally. My resentment apparently went quite deep, for it several times happened that, when we encountered each other, my usual uncertainty about recognizing people got out of hand at the behest of my unconscious and I quite failed to know Warshow. His way of dealing with this does him great credit and was the beginning of my personal admiration of him—on one occasion he came up to me and said in a manner that was both angry and good-natured, "Look here, I think it's about time you knew who I was."

IF OUR FIRST ALIENATION from each other was in part a matter of generations, of, as it were, the cultural family, I must find it especially charming that we began to come together on a matter of the actual family. My very young son had an aversion to haircuts and I had brought him from the West Side to Madison Avenue (which has, we must remember, its domestic reaches) where there was a special children's barbershop which might make the ordeal less terrible. But the boy refused to be reassured—stormily, desperately, he refused to go in, and I stood on the street in the peculiar humiliation of a father who cannot manage his child. It was at this moment that Warshow appeared, and, despite the strain between us, he addressed himself to the situation. Although he was so much younger than me, he was older as a father. Far from being prepared to make an ultimate diagnosis, he seemed to think that a phobic attitude to haircuts might be within the range of normality. From his own experience, he took a dim view of the sincerity of the advertised child-orientation of this barbershop and recommended another which he believed to be more truly sympathetic. He went so far as to question whether the boy's shagginess had reached the point where a haircut was imperative; his opinion was that it might wait.

And when at last we began to see each other by design, the relation between us, my wife being included, was curiously based on a common concern with child-rearing. As a rule, nothing is more destructive to civilized discourse than conversation about children and how to bring them up. But Warshow provided the exception. He was the more involved in the problematical aspects of the enterprise because, his wife having become incurably ill, he had the sole care of his young son. He brought to these conversations nothing of what most people bring, the sense of guilt or of personal failure, or some unformed, dimly apprehended wish to reject the very idea of society. He spoke about children with his whole instructed awareness of culture, its good possibilities and its benign necessities as well as its traps and lies. He on his side and we on ours were in articulate revolt against the dominant "progressive" ideas of child-rearing. We felt them to be charged with a scarcely concealed animosity to parents and an es-

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sential malice toward children which lay hidden under the manifest child-partisanship, an impulse to deprive children of their dignity by underestimating their powers. The three of us joined in repudiating the conception of life—safe, simplified, unimpassioned—that was implicit in almost everything that the experts were saying. We confessed to the most retrograde desires for our sons, that they should become men of firm and responsible character; and adventurous, even heroic, in their quest for happiness and even for pleasure; and, into the bargain, intellectually distinguished. We went so far as to think that we had the right to influence them to have such intentions for themselves; we were willing, God forgive us, to commit the ultimate sin of "putting pressure" on them. One conversation that I especially remember occurred in the company of others, of whom some expressed surprise and dismay at the line that Warshow was taking, and he, with great fervor made an appeal to history, choosing an example that would have quite confounded almost any truly progressive mind. He said: "When Charles I was in prison, awaiting execution, he had his youngest son, Henry, brought to him. The boy was nine years old. The father told the son what was going to happen, and explained that when he was dead there would be some people who would want to make Henry king, but that the boy must never consent to this because his oldest brother was rightfully the father's successor. Then he kissed the boy and sent him away. *That* was how a father once expected he could talk to his nine-year-old son!"

THE LAST TIME I saw Warshow was when he came to dinner, bringing with him, as he had said he would, a toy that had been outgrown by his own son and that he now wanted to give to mine. It was a magnificent fortress, with battlements and a drawbridge and a considerable complement of rather splendid lead soldiers. Everything was in excellent condition, nothing was lacking to make it a fine present. But to it Warshow had added a brand-new box of grenadiers or guardsmen which he had stopped on his way to buy. He explained, when we protested this extravagance, that to a boy it would not have been a present unless there was something new—it would have been a thing given but not a present. He said this with an especial gravity and it seemed to me that in his action and its enunciated principle there was something more than the sweet wish to insure the perfection of a child's pleasure. I thought I understood what this was when, a few months after Warshow's death, I read one of Isaac Babel's stories about his boyhood and came on the passage in which Babel speaks of children's passion for a new thing. "Children," he says, "shudder at the smell of newness as a dog does when it scents a hare, expressing the madness which later, when we grow up, is called inspiration." Warshow, it seemed to me, had meant his gift not only for a boy but for a man.

In his own case the connection between his boyhood and his manhood was one of the notable things about him. I have spoken of him in his paternal role, which was chiefly how he showed himself to me. But the qualities which marked his behavior as a father, the vivid consciousness, delicacy, and respect, derived from his continuing connection with his own boyhood. This constituted a considerable part of his personal charm, by which I do not mean that he was "boyish" but that he had certain traits which we expect boys to have, and which they really do have, at least in greater degree than grown men—directness, a chivalrous sense of fairness, a commitment to the ideal of courage, and a felt intimacy with reason, with the way things ought to be.

And his connection with his boyhood played a decisive part in Warshow's intellectual life and goes far toward explaining, among other things, why the movies were a chief object of his critical intention

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and why he wrote about them so well. What will serve as the preface to the volume of his collected works was originally part of an application for a fellowship to complete a book about film. Such "statements of project" are difficult to write and it is perhaps worth saying that, of the many I have read, this is quite the best, the most communicative, the least troubled by that embarrassment which overtakes a literary person when he has to explain and justify what he wants to do in order to get money to do it. In this document Warshow speaks of his relation to the movies with an intelligent simplicity which derives from his never having repudiated the passion for the screen that he had felt in boyhood. In this he was like the other remarkable film critic of our time, who also died untimely, James Agee. There are great differences in the work of the two men, for Agee experienced the movies in an almost wholly unmediated way, while Warshow came to them with the questions of an avowed intellectual and a highly politicalized intellectual at that. But the two men are at one in their unabashed response to the charm that the art had for them, not merely in special instances of high success but entirely, in all its range. In describing his own mode of criticism, Warshow speaks, with all due admiration, of those critics who deal seriously with film either in the aesthetic way or in the sociological and psychological way and who, by one intellectual means or another, forbid themselves "the immediate experience of seeing and responding to the movies as most of us see and respond to them." "A man watches a movie," he says, "and the critic must acknowledge that he is that man." He meant, of course, that the man watches the movie with some degree of involvement and pleasure in it, responding to the personal charm of the actors and actresses, finding that the fantasy of the screen suits to some extent, perhaps to a great extent, with his own fantasy. And of himself as the man who watches the movie, Warshow says that in some way he takes "all that nonsense" seriously.

THE ABILITY TO take all that nonsense seriously was what made Warshow the remarkable critic of film that he is. From it he derived his special accuracy in perceiving when the nonsense was artful and charming nonsense, or vulgar and lying nonsense, or nonsense with some odd sense to it, and when, as sometimes happens, it stopped being nonsense at all. And by extension the ability to take the nonsense seriously made him a remarkable critic in general. His work seen whole and in retrospect has a fineness of temper and tone and a degree of actuality which make it unique in its time. When we make this judgment what we are responding to is the dialogue between reason and fact which is sustained throughout the work, giving it a complexity which makes it analogous with life. This dialogue is initiated by Warshow's willingness to implicate himself in what he wrote about, even when he knew it to be faulty or vulgar or without dignity. In the course of a review of a volume of E. B. White's essays, Warshow remarks of the *New Yorker* that "it has always dealt with experience not by trying to understand it but by prescribing the attitude to be adopted to it." This is, of course, a way of dealing with experience which is common enough. It marks much intellectual effort that is far more ambitious than the *New Yorker*'s. It was not Warshow's way. Anyone who wants to press literally upon the sentence I have quoted can say that it isn't possible for the critic to free himself from attitude, nor from the impulse to bring about in his readers the adoption of one attitude or another. But in the sense that Warshow was using the word, attitude means mere attitude, unearned attitude, eventually the attitude of dissociation from experience. If we make criticism itself the object of investigation into the personal motives it may serve, we might say that one of the uses to which it can be put, both by the

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reader and by the critic himself, is to keep experience at a comfortable distance. But the principle by which Warshow worked was never to separate himself from the matter in hand, always to implicate himself in it. His criticism begins with the recognition of the human relevance of even the patently unworthy objects of his attention. He understands their deficiencies as being perhaps capable of making an appeal to some presumed deficiency in himself. And, since he was not a self-denigrating person, he could even entertain the possibility that the deficiency in himself might be connected in some vital way with a virtue. It is this self-implication, as against the quick readiness of many critics to hold themselves immune from all deficiency, that accounts for the tone of honesty that we hear in Warshow's work, what I have called the quality of *plainness,* the rejection of attitude in favor of understanding. The word attitude still carries some of the histrionic meaning it used to have, and what I speak of as Warshow's plainness implies his (perhaps conscious) avoidance of all the histrionism that can find its way into the intellectual life. The categories of history and politics were essential to his thought, but he never, in his idea of himself as an intellectual, conceived of himself as being "on the stage of history," as having a "role" assigned to him by the *Zeitgeist.* He thought and felt, so far as a man can, *in propria persona.* That is why he is remembered so vividly.

His plainness, we must see, was very elegant. Nothing was so characteristic of Warshow as his feeling for English prose. He is to be read as something more than a good critic, he is to be read as a good writer—that is to say, the pleasure in reading him comes not merely from the cogency of his thought but also from his manner of presenting it, ultimately from his relation to the things he wrote about. I have the sense that it has become old-fashioned, almost quaint, to praise, as if it were a moral quality, the style of a writer of expository prose. But Warshow's style demands such praise, of the kind that used to be given to, say, Hazlitt, and indeed I believe that certain of his pieces —I would mention especially "The 'Idealism' of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg" and "The Westerner"—establish themselves in the line of Hazlitt, a tradition in which I would place only one other writer of our time, George Orwell, with whose feeling for the language Warshow's had much in common. Everything Warshow wrote is marked by a tone of authority which is as firm as it is modest. I have been told that he composed by a method which is unusual; he formed each sentence slowly in his mind, and, when it was satisfactory, wrote it down as irrevocable. It is a method which is beyond my practical comprehension, but I can see that it might help to account for the way the prose moves, with a deliberate energy, a spirited gravity, refusing to be hurried as it makes its patient qualifications and witty distinctions, yet always pressing forward and taking us securely with it.

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MEYER LIBEN

PAST DUE

A Story

WE FOLLOWED THE ordinary procedures with this account, took the usual precautions. We received the inquiry, which we answered as a matter of course, enclosing our current price lists, with a covering letter, trusting that the recipient would find the enclosed of interest, and that we would be pleased, etc. A few days later the order arrived, a sizable one, a little over $1,000. Although the account had a D2 Rating ($35,000 to $50,000 *Good*), we drew a detailed report, which was satisfactory, from the point of view of Net Worth (disregarding the fixed assets which we naturally depreciated heavily), since they had been doing business at the same location for seventeen years, no fires reported, and because of the over-all sense of confidence one gets from the report of a solvent business in steady growth. The business was owned by two partners, both native to the area, both married, both drawing modest sums from the enterprise. They had established satisfactory credit ratings with a number of suppliers (as high as $7,000 with their principal supplier) and met their obligations promptly. With some of these suppliers they had been dealing for more than ten years. We had our own rule-of-thumb method in figuring a credit high: we added 25 per cent of Current Assets minus Current Liabilities plus 15 per cent of Net Worth plus 3 per cent of Gross Yearly Sales, and divided the total by three. We were a little more careful with corporations, and there are other elements—years in business, etc. On this basis the firm was entitled to some $3,000 credit. We had in fact extended credit in the amount of this initial order to companies with a much less effective report than this one showed, so we shipped out the merchandise without hesitation, according to our usual 10th Prox. terms. This was in fact the kind of account we were looking for—well-rated, well-established, in an area where we had no representation.

The merchandise was shipped on the last day of March, and the bill was due for payment on April 10. However, when we did not receive a check at that time, I was not surprised. Our new customers had actually received the goods on the 3rd of April (the date of shipment falling on a Friday) and had disregarded, as many customers do under the circumstances, the statement which they received a few days after the merchandise (and a day after the invoice). In looking over the Outstanding toward the middle of April, I noted this omission. It occurred to me that, this being the very first shipment, they could perhaps have gone out of their way to meet the payment on its technical due-date. But I was not very disturbed by their neglect.

MEYER LIBEN is a native New Yorker whose work has appeared previously in COMMENTARY as well as other magazines. His story, "The Locking Gas-Cap," printed in our December 1957 number, won a Longview literary award; "Past Due" is part of a projected book of short stories, *The Day's Work*.

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When Mr. Magruder, the owner of the firm, paused at the name of this new account in the course of his monthly review of the Outstanding, I explained the circumstances. He shrugged, and went on down the list.

When I went over the Outstanding toward the middle of May, the account was still unpaid. I therefore dictated a letter, of the quiet sort, pointing out that our bill had doubtless been overlooked, and that we would appreciate a prompt remittance.

So, when a few days later, Mr. Magruder asked me, "Say, what about Fowler & Walker?" I was able to say: "I wrote them day before yesterday."

That satisfied Mr. Magruder. I must say that he was an unusual boss. He made no irrational demands on us, was satisfied if we did the proper thing at the right time. He tried, as much as he could, to conduct his enterprise in a civilized way, treated it as a kind of Applied Art. I thought of previous employers of mine who would have raised the roof, certainly at the delay in writing, who would have demanded immediate and drastic steps, and retroactively criticized the unwarranted extension of credit. But Mr. Magruder recognized that the procedure so far was quite in order, and he waited now for the proper time to take the next necessary step. If there was anything to criticize in Mr. Magruder, it was a kind of superblandness, an excessive bounding of the wild and competitive. Sometimes one forgot that there was money involved. And yet he ran an extraordinarily efficient and profitable business.

After a week's time, having received no answer to my letter, I put through a long-distance call, person to person, for either Mr. Fowler or Mr. Walker. When the operator informed me that neither one was available, I inquired as to who *was* there, was told that Mrs. Walker was in the office, and asked to speak to her. A woman with a strong, but unusually clear Southern drawl got onto the phone.

"Mrs. Walker," I said, "you've not answered our bill, our statements, nor the letter we sent you last week."

"I'm very sorry," she said, "but my husband is out of town."

"Isn't Mr. Fowler there?"

After a pause, she said: "Well, he's out right now. But we'll try to send you something on account very soon."

"I don't understand, Mrs. Walker, your bill is overdue, you people are well rated."

"We'll have something for you soon," she said, and it was all I could get out of her. She seemed very troubled, and spoke with obvious sincerity.

Two days later, in an air-mail envelope, a $50 check arrived. Mr. Magruder was as puzzled by all this as I was, and sent out a letter, in which he asked for some kind of explanation before handing the matter over to an attorney. He really did want an explanation, and a reasonable one would have sufficed.

It happened that I was leaving in a couple of days for a trip to Washington, where a niece of mine was being married. This was to be the beginning of a week's vacation. I mentioned to my boss that I'd make it my business to get down to see Fowler & Walker, they being one hundred miles or so further south.

"Fine," said Mr. Magruder. "It would obviously be better for you to see them before turning the matter over to an attorney for collection."

AN OLD GERMAN proverb says: "The air of the city makes free." Although mystified by the origins of this proverb (for the German state has not been backward in surrendering to the centralizing and tyrannical tendencies to which all states are prone), I go along with it. In its remarkable diversity, in its built-in snooping character, "the air of the city makes free," and I rarely have a particular need to leave it, except to go to another great city and breathe there another *kind* of freedom. Small towns depress me, they can be taken in too easily, are too easy to unify;

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there is no mystery, no dark alley, no arcade, no way of losing yourself in a crowd which, generally speaking, lets you be, without contempt or suspicion, with a kind of natural indifference.

These, at any rate, were the thoughts I had in leaving for this short vacation; no doubt they are related in some way to my disinclination to travel, which is related in turn to a somewhat insanely purist notion that the time to travel arrives when your work and experience at home are absolutely exhausted. But that time never arrives, and so you find yourself criticizing other areas, other kinds of life; you discover that only the city is free, because you are disinclined to leave, and make a fetish of freedom on the base of an inexplicable fear.

As soon as I drove past the outskirts of the city, I felt very thin, very attenuated, as though my blood had suddenly cooled; the unfamiliar landscape had so little meaning to me, I could not get close to it, and the continual disappearance of objects with which I had only the most tenuous connection dispirited and continued to dispirit me. I turned on the radio, sought some warmth in the familiarity of "The Masterwork Hour," in the incessant jabber of the disc jockey, in the latest that Tin Pan Alley had to offer. That all helped, but the sounds seemed so far off, and I headed south in hardly a vacation mood.

I CAME INTO Washington Saturday afternoon, checked in at a hotel (which had been previously recommended to me by one of the salesmen in the firm—this created for me an air of familiarity), and headed for my sister's house. The wedding was scheduled for Sunday afternoon, and I was naturally caught up in all the preceding social activities. I am very fond of my niece, and in the presence of her imminent marriage I was quite absorbed, emotionally taken up. I had little opportunity to see and taste the city; it did not strike me as particularly Southern, it was rather stony and impersonal. Of course, the government bureaus were closed over the weekend, and I was seeing the city out of a dense sociability; the best way to experience a city is to experience it alone, or alone with another. But even that kind of experience can be pretty superficial, betraying at best a yearning for experience. By Sunday afternoon—before the wedding—I had decided that I would leave the next morning, drive down to Fowler & Walker, probably come back the same night, and spend the rest of the week in Washington, in my sister's apartment. It was a small apartment, but since Isabel was going off on her honeymoon, there would be no room problem—I mean to say that my sister and brother-in-law would be no more crowded than they had ever been.

I felt all the usual emotions at the wedding; it is the sign of my irreversible conventionality that I share on these occasions all the emotions that all the others are sharing with me—in this case the sadness and hopefulness before this curious legalizing of the wildest feelings. Watching Isabel, in all her beauty, in all her girlish yielding, as Joyce wrote, "Begin thou softly to unzone/Thy girlish bosom unto him"—I forgot my own miserable marriage, which had ended three years ago after five miserable years, years of monstrous quarrels and inconclusive reconciliations, years buried beyond cause or blame; it no longer mattered who had left whom, or who had tried to give the effect of being the prime mover, in order to create what sense of who not being left? This was how I forgot my marriage as I looked on at my niece's wedding, and I was amazed at how surprised I was that I could feel this sense of hope, this confidence; for the idea of a marriage, the continual marrying everywhere, was a sign of humanity's stubborn belief in itself, in the value of its own continuance. If the institution was not destroyed by the continuing failures of the individual marriages (looking around at the married couples, I

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wondered if perhaps the institution was not held up by these failures), why then the institution is needed; it is answering some deep and ancient need, a need which will ultimately be answered, if not by this institution, then by another institution which will spring from this one, or from the need which this one does not altogether answer. I was rather confused by my own optimism, even a little ashamed of it, but enjoyed the wedding, and was able to absorb the sense of uneasiness which the prospect of my next day's trip south was causing me.

Riding south the next morning, I tried to understand what was so difficult, so unpleasant, about riding in this direction. It was connected with an early fear of disease, which was in turn equated with the jungle. I remembered the apprehension with which I had read *Arrowsmith* as a boy, how I was scared by the vividness of the living germ. For me the jungle was disease-ridden, out of its dense vegetation swarmed the dangerous flies and menacing mosquitoes. The South was therefore for me a taboo area, and here I was, riding toward that early danger. I turned on the radio; the voice was familiar, but in dense static, and I turned it off.

I sought for a sexual explanation of these rather strong emotions. Certain words in my own formulation led that way. The forbidden area. The geographical direction. The dense vegetation. What clearer symbols were needed? And the disease, the equation of disease with prostitution. We had gone together to the whorehouse, and my friend had picked up a little dose. Then the awesome possibilities of syphilis were brought home to me—the eating away, the softening of the brain, the whole miserable process from chancre to paresis. My attitude was obviously lacking in objectivity, my unconscious equations were founded on faulty premises. But fears are not refuted by recognition of illogicalities. I gripped the steering wheel more firmly, looked blankly out at the unfamiliar landscape.

Would this blundering analysis account for other feelings I had about the South? About its literature, for example? I have a distaste for much of Southern writing, I find unpleasant the nostalgia over an order forever gone; the attitude is quite un-American, in the sense that it conflicts with the American movement forward, our dynamic building, as opposed to the reconstruction of what can obviously not be put together again. I except Edgar Allan Poe. His cry was above sectionalism, a universal shriek; it is still sounding.

LET ME NOW DESCRIBE what happened in the Fowler-Walker matter. Their concern is located in a small Southern city; for all I know it may be a large Southern town—I am not expert enough to say. I would not plainly call it a city, it does not have the approaches of a city; one suddenly falls on it. But it is a county seat, that seems to mean a great deal. It has a bank, a library, a movie; people are said to come in on Saturday to shop, and on Saturday night to enjoy themselves. I discovered that Mr. Walker had skipped town on the very weekend when our merchandise was being shipped, though there was no connection between the two matters; merely another illustration of how business goes on, if not as usual. He had skipped with the wife of his partner, Mr. Fowler. This departure marked the latest stage in an affair which had been going on for a number of years. There was a rumor that they were in Europe. Mrs. Walker now seemed to be in charge of the enterprise; it was with Mrs. Walker that I fell in love. Fowler was either more upset than Mrs. Walker or he showed it in a different way, because he rarely came into the place of business, leaving the burden on Mrs. Walker. Mr. Walker had apparently taken a fair share of the cash assets with him, and his wife was faced with a formidable indebtedness, which she was doing her best to work off. The local suppliers, knowing the situation, were going along with her. She was a woman with an extra-

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ordinary winning manner; I gathered that she had had no connection with the business up to now, nevertheless she handled affairs with a sure touch. Why would a man have left a woman of such an obviously superior nature? But this is an idiotic question—judgments by strangers cannot get close to the mystery of withdrawals and attractions.

We spoke at length, not because we had so much to talk about but because personal interest (in this case *my* personal interest) gives conversation drama and extension; also I was making every effort to keep the conversation from dying, because I was formally bound by the time limits of a business call. When I had first introduced myself, she did not act surprised; she had a dead-pan expression, really a kind of fixed, hurt look which I found most interesting. But no doubt I would have found another kind of expression on her just as interesting. She was running an impressive General Store, specializing in high-tag items—home appliances, farm equipment, and the like. She explained, rather quaintly, that Mr. Fowler was very depressed by what had happened, and was not now very active in the enterprise. Nevertheless, sales were holding up, and she thought that she'd be able to make a sizable payment to my firm in a few months. Meanwhile she gave me a check for $75. The news on the business side was definitely favorable. I could just see the surprise and acceptance on Mr. Magruder's face when he read the letter which I was planning to write him later that day.

After a while I recognized that I was outstaying my time, lingering beyond the call of business. Every now and then she'd excuse herself and take care of some business detail out front. When I suggested that we dine together, she accepted my invitation. I do not know whether I was amazed more by her boldness than by her acceptance.

I returned early in the evening. She got into the car with me. The compromising nature of the situation was somewhat obscured by the flight of her husband. Still, I was a stranger (would it have been any easier for her if I were a local man?), and she was a married woman, mother of a seventeen-year-old girl.

SHE SEEMED MORE FRAGILE, close in the car, than she had in the place of business. She directed me to a restaurant on a road off the main highway, some ten miles off. The evening began to move with an extraordinary swiftness. I could not quite catch up with the strangeness of the situation; I only knew that I should not like to move from her side. Our conversation was intimate and impersonal, our relation was basically absurd. I was not so spellbound that I couldn't observe how wounded she was, and how I represented, by my constant interest and unflagging attention, a healing force, comfort from a stranger. But it was a situation without a past or a future, she had no plans, no desire to leave this town, and was prepared to accept the transiency of whatever was happening between us. I tried to create a past by mentioning the telephone call I had made months ago, from the city, but she smiled, refusing to be drawn into this factitious area. I then tried the method of recapitulation.

"Look," I said, "I came down from Washington to collect a bill, find out the reasons for the lengthy indebtedness. . . ." But my details trailed off. Now it seemed that I could not break through the business barrier. That was it, our connection was a business one, I was trapped in some monstrous, impoverished world, attempting, vainly, to break out into the open, to approach this woman freely. That was truly impossible. Never before had I understood so clearly how far apart people can be, how the desire to be close is not enough to bring you close, how there is an illusion of closeness, worse than distance, how we must come to one another from a long distance, being able to move slowly and surely through that cold space. At the

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other end was the awful familiarity which suffocated spirit, life's incredible stratagem to show people at their worst, to dirty one another by an unloving closeness. Wasn't that what we were both trying to avoid?

I HAD CALLED my sister before my dinner engagement with Mrs. Walker, telling her that I would not be back in Washington until the next day, being kept over by business necessities. However, I now decided that I would not stay over, but head straight north, and not for Washington, but for New York. Somehow the idea of spending the rest of my week's vacation with my sister and brother-in-law in their small apartment, as a kind of stand-in for their honeymooning daughter, did not appeal to me. So I started to drive through the night. After some hours of driving along the mostly deserted highway through darkened towns and lost-looking villages (looking as though they had strayed off from some big friendly town), past houses buried in fields, being rather tired, I began to have a phantom feeling, afloat in an ever-present lightness, weightlessness. The lit-up pumps of a gas station bring your body back to you, and then you are off again into the desolate darkness. It became perfectly obvious that I could not make New York without a stopover, and I headed for Baltimore. In the immaculate hotel room, with its inevitable furnishings, which struck me, on entering, as the props for some long-abandoned play, I had a feeling similar to the weightlessness which I had felt on my auto ride. I felt denuded of experience, as though nothing had really ever happened to me, as though it was not possible for anything ever to happen to me.

I realized suddenly that this was Poe's city. The poet of desperate experience, the fighter for a lost personal cause, who struggled to create a harmony out of the undifferentiated chaos of everyday living —"None sings so well/ As the angel Israfel."

"Ha," I thought, "so this is the meaning of natural immortality, for a shade to hover over a living man?"

And my empty soul began to fill with bits of matter—room objects, wall shadows, remembered events, and with streamings of experience.

Then I fell asleep and dreamt a wedding ceremony. Mr. Magruder and Mrs. Walker were the groom and bride. They walked slowly over a Civil War battlefield. Now and then the air was filled with the boom of guns, with clouds of smoke; the newlyweds walked imperturbably through scenes of carnage. I saw myself, incredulously, as the best man, and when it came to sign the papers, I handed over to Mr. Magruder a check for $879.23.

Then I woke up and headed for New York City.

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MARXISM AND THE COLONIAL REVOLT

PAUL KECSKEMETI

The Western world is facing two great revolutionary currents—the Marxist onslaught, represented chiefly by Soviet and Chinese Communism, and the colonial revolt, aimed at throwing off Western control where it still exists in non-Western areas. How can we assess the significance of these revolutionary currents? Do they reflect some deep-lying defect in Western institutions, some intolerable iniquity ingrained in these institutions and curable only by revolution? And will the two currents finally merge, confronting the Western world with an overwhelming and mortal challenge?

Three significant books dealing with these revolutionary challenges from different viewpoints have recently appeared. Taken together, they throw considerable light on the problems involved.

I

MARXIST THOUGHT RELATES the problem of revolution to socio-economic arrangements, "production relations" that become outworn, maladaptive, and, finally, intolerable. In due time, when capitalism reaches the last stage of its development, revolution becomes unavoidable. This approach to the problem of revolution exerts a great suggestive influence beyond the Marxist camp. Actually, however, revolutionary Marxism is emerging more and more, not as a successor to capitalism but as a phenomenon parallel to it, an alternative method for building an industrial society from primitive, pre-capitalist, mercantilist, and feudal antecedents. Where revolutionary Marxism has triumphed, it has not completed and transcended but *duplicated* the capitalist process of superimposing an urban and technological economic civilization upon a rural, pre-industrial one. This has been the role played by revolutionary Marxism in Russia and China; in the underdeveloped areas, where a similar initial situation exists, it bids fair to repeat the performance.

It is reasonable to conclude from this that today's revolutionary Marxism is alien in its essence from what Marx and his immediate followers had in mind. By seizing power in largely agrarian Russia, one is led to argue, Lenin parted company with Marx. This was lucky for Marxism as a political movement, for had capitalism matured, the conditions for a Marxist, proletarian revolution would no longer have been given. But for Marxism as a doctrine, such an anomalous triumph was a disaster. Marxism could achieve power only by showing up the unrealistic nature of its founder's original vision.

Plausible as this argument may be, it has been vigorously challenged by a profound and original book, *The Unfinished Revolution,* by Adam B. Ulam.* To take the Marxian doctrine as being all of a piece, Ulam maintains, would be a fundamental misunderstanding. It is, in fact, a combination of heterogeneous, nay, contradictory elements. True, one of these is the sequential law, according to which capitalism must run its course before the advent of socialism; and neither Lenin's revolutionary achievement nor the actual developments in advanced capitalist societies can be squared with this law. Still, the sequential theory is not the whole of Marxism.

Ulam isolates within the Marxian doctrine

PAUL KECSKEMETI has been writing for COMMENTARY for over ten years now; his last previous contribution, a review of Hadley Cantril's *The Politics of Despair,* appeared in August 1959. Mr. Kecskemeti is the author of *Strategic Surrender* (1958).

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a revolutionary message which is independent of the sequential law, inspired not by theoretical speculation about the final stage of capitalism, but by the felt reality of capitalism's *nascent* stage. As a revolutionary, Marx voiced the feelings of the uprooted, "alienated" country people, disastrously transplanted from the oppressive and narrow but still meaningful rural world into the "dark Satanic mills" of incipient industrialization. The only response possible for this first, newly uprooted generation of industrial workers was total, anarchist revolt. And it was the anarchistic condemnation of industry and industrial civilization as such —coexisting in Marxism with its opposite, the glorification of industrial technology— which attracted the proletariat of the early industrial age to Marxism as a revolutionary creed. This anarchistic-revolutionary strain in Marxism, essentially a rural protest against industrial degradation, was, however, perfectly consistent with Lenin's strategy of the "premature" seizure of power, and with the alliance with the peasantry which made that seizure possible. It was not a pragmatic disregard for the spirit and letter of Marxian doctrine but, on the contrary, a total "immersion" in Marxism, which enabled Lenin to evolve his victorious revolutionary strategy. Lenin's Marxist critics, Ulam says, have overlooked the fact that "a Marxist revolution was possible in Russia precisely *because* [my italics] capitalism had not fully developed in the country, precisely because Russia was not ready for socialism."

While it was the anarchistic élan of Russia's still incompletely urbanized industrial workers and peasant masses that made the victory of the Bolshevik revolution possible, the consolidation of the Bolshevik regime, Ulam goes on to say, required the exact opposite: the total acceptance of the industrial way of life and the stamping out of anarchistic egalitarianism. This was Stalin's work. Under him, the other side of Marxism, extolling the values of industrialism and postulating a capitalist stage as a necessary antecedent to socialism, came to the fore.

Far from liberating the "toiling masses," Stalinism imposed upon them the full rigor of early capitalism with all its exploitative harshness. Western socialist critics have seen in this a betrayal of the Marxian doctrine; but, Ulam contends, such an accusation is as mistaken as the one leveled at Lenin's allegedly unorthodox strategy. For Stalin's way of constructing a socialist society was also perfectly authentic Marxism. Marx had conceived "socialism" as identical, in its basic elements, with capitalism—except for the one difference that the individual capitalist was to be supplanted by a central planning and directing agency. Socialism, in the Marxian sense, was "capitalism without the capitalists."

According to Ulam, the full impact of revolutionary Marxism can be explained only in terms of both its components—the revolutionary anarchist protest against industrial discipline, and the socialist acceptance of the industrial order. The former gives the needed impetus for a revolutionary struggle; the latter permits the establishment of a stable political system under whose auspices the productive forces of the society can be rapidly developed. It is this duality which accounts for the triumph of revolutionary Marxism in Russia. By the same token, says Ulam, "Marxism has provided a master revolutionary formula for the underdeveloped areas. . . . There is something natural, and it would be foolish to disregard it, in the appeal of Marxism as a system of thought for an Asian revolutionary; there is something natural in the technique of the Marxist party for the political movements of the underdeveloped countries."

II

ULAM'S WARNING against oversimplification of the Marxian concept of revolution seems to me well taken: revolution, to Marx, was not something to be postponed until capitalism had run its preordained course—that is, until all middle strata had become submerged in the proletariat. Marx himself, in his career as a practicing or aspiring revolutionist, was constantly on the lookout for revolutionary opportunities that could be seized by the proletariat in conjunction with the other classes. The sequential law implied for him only that capitalism was headed for collapse in any case in the long run, but not that the process could not be accelerated by revolutions with a mixed class basis in backward countries.

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It was, of course, an essential idea with Marx that the proletarian forces participating in such revolutions would eventually have to seize total control (if possible), turning upon their temporary partners and depriving them of every influence. But this was precisely what the Bolsheviks did by annihilating the Social Revolutionaries and relegating the peasantry to a subordinate position. Bolshevik revolutionary strategy in backward Russia was authentically Marxian in this respect too; and Communist revolutionary strategy in other underdeveloped countries has followed the same authentic pattern. The strategy involves deception. In the initial stage, the Marxists pretend to accept the pluralist basis of the revolution; they pose as sympathetic partners of the peasants, or, in colonial and semi-colonial areas, of the "national bourgeoisie." This acceptance of pluralism is conditional; the real objective is always to replace pluralism by the dictatorship of the proletariat as soon as the partners can be dispensed with.

Marxist doctrine demands a concentrated effort to progress from pluralism to unified, dictatorial "proletarian" rule in premature revolutions. But this transition, to my mind, cannot be construed as a switch from one set of motives, rural anarchism and anti-industrialism, to an antithetical one, devotion to the industrial way of life. The early Bolshevik regime under Lenin was neither "anarcho-syndicalist" nor anti-industrial in its outlook. It was not Stalin who started disciplining the proletariat; Lenin's system of "War Communism" already amounted to universal forced labor. True, this policy was relaxed under the NEP (the New Economic Policy, begun in 1921), which made concessions to both syndicalism and private enterprise; but the relaxation had nothing to do with countenancing any rural revolt against the industrial way of life.

Whether in the harsh form of "War Communism" or the relatively lenient one of the NEP, Lenin's system imposed upon the industrial workers a regime which was not just "capitalism without the capitalists" but infinitely more oppressive. Of course, it was not that "socialism" as conceived by Marx and his school was *meant* to be essentially identical with capitalism. For Marx (as well as for Lenin and also Stalin) it was axiomatic that the downfall of capitalism would bring an immediate improvement in the living conditions of the workers; the denial of this would have struck them as sheer blasphemy.* Indeed, one of the reasons that extreme regimentation had to be imposed in Russia from 1918 on was that the workers, indoctrinated by the Marxists who themselves were full of illusions about the immediate effects of the introduction of "socialism," were clamoring for impossible improvements.

The first revolutionary élan of Russia's lower classes was nurtured by these false expectations—as well as by many other hopes, passions, hatreds, and grievances; but a rural protest against the industrial way of life, if it existed at all, played a negligible role. There was, to begin with, the terrible shock effect of the bloody, interminable, and unsuccessful war; and beyond this, the age-old ferment of Russian radicalism, pressing for a total renewal of Russia's political and social order which would do away with the inherently corrupt, morally intolerable Czarist system. This ferment, stirring among the peasantry, the intelligentsia, the youth, and part of the gentry, antedated the beginnings of large-scale industrialization; and the "premature" revolutionary situation which the Bolsheviks exploited was largely a heritage of such early radicalism.

III

THE RECORD AND SIGNIFICANCE of the pre-Marxist radical revolutionary movements in Russia is masterfully presented in *Roots of Revolution* by Franco Venturi.† The work is admirable for its immense wealth of documentation as well as for the consummate skill with which the material is presented. Above all, Venturi succeeds in making the reader realize that the Russian nihilists and anarchists of the second half of the 19th century were more than a lunatic fringe, notwithstanding their crude utopianism and fanatic destructiveness. He

* What Marx said in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* was that socialism, by paying everyone "according to his work," would improve upon capitalism which paid people only what their work capacity (*Arbeitskraft*) was worth—but that this socialist principle still fell far short of the final ideal of paying everyone according to his "needs."

† Knopf, 850 pp., $12.75.

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shows how this proliferation of desperate conspiracies (for which he uses the generic term "Populism") grew out of the Russian situation. A mood of extreme protest was an inevitable response to the miscarriage of Czar Alexander II's great reform, the liberation of the serfs in 1861.

Serfdom had meant an intolerable condition of personal servitude for the peasant, but the personal freedom granted him in 1861 fell far short of "real" freedom as the peasants understood it. Under the old system, the peasants felt that they belonged to the landlord but that the land belonged to them. The liberation decree gave them no unconditional property rights in either the seigneurial lands or the common lands which they had tilled. This denial of land tenure not only deprived the peasants of the kind of economic security they had had under serfdom; it also outraged their elementary concepts of justice. Thus, based upon principles totally alien to the peasant way of thinking, the liberation opened up a moral chasm between the Czar and the people.

The Populists, mostly impoverished noblemen or struggling intellectuals who passionately identified themselves with the submerged millions of rural Russia, gave these feelings of outrage articulate expression. But, Venturi shows, the outstanding characteristic of Populism was that the Populists themselves did not share the peasant mentality and were totally devoid of any romantic admiration for the sacred, traditional, spiritual aspects of Russian folk culture. They looked, on the contrary, exclusively to Western Europe for intellectual guidance. They all described themselves as socialists and avidly followed the radical political literature of the West; the writings of the Saint-Simonists, Fourier, Proudhon, Marx, and many other socialist system-builders and advocates of revolution were their bread and butter.

From our present perspective, a brand of socialism concerned chiefly with peasant land tenure looks rather odd; but to the Populists, the old Russian form of communal landholding, the *obshchina,* embodied the ideas of the most advanced Western socialist thinkers. Thus, Russia would be reborn as a "society of equals," or as a "phalanstery"—or under any other form one might choose to symbolize an egalitarian communist utopia—as the peasants took common ownership of all the land; then, all other branches of production could be organized on a communal or cooperative basis. The Populists wanted to bypass capitalistic industrial developments: Russia was to avoid going the way of the West, not by cultivating her own separate traditions, but by tearing down her useless and outworn political system and realizing at one stroke what the "best," most advanced Western thinkers were merely dreaming about. The West was hampered by its history: it was unable to rid itself of its past precisely because its inherited institutions were still viable. But in Russia, whatever existed was good only for the dust heap. In particular, all existing forms of authority and hierarchy were evil—morally unacceptable. One had to begin with a *tabula rasa.*

THE POPULISTS' CONCEPTION of socialism, needless to say, was unrealistic in the extreme; theirs was truly a lost cause. Their onslaughts, renewed after every failure, led only to the scaffold or Siberia; and when the revolution eventually triumphed, it disfranchised the peasants instead of giving them their "real freedom." And yet the heritage of Populism was essential to later revolutionary developments. Against the background of their struggle, which created a powerful myth, gradualism or moderate opposition looked pale and futile. While in the West the fantasies of the early socialist system-builders only appeared—dimly—at the fringe of the intellectual spectrum, in Russia they acquired intellectual respectability, thanks to the Populists; thus socialism remained on the agenda not merely as a serious political possibility, but, in the eyes of many earnest intellectuals and students, as the only genuine alternative to the status quo. It was also the Populists who evolved both the type of the full-time, professional revolutionary and the clandestine organizational techniques which the Bolsheviks were to utilize later.

Populism exerted its greatest historical impact, however, by its radical denial of the legitimacy of Russia's political authority structure. Until the Populist onslaught, the legitimacy of the monarchic system had not been in doubt. To the peasants (even when they were in open revolt), the Czar was the

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natural head of the social family—the fountainhead of justice. Only the Czar could set things to rights, because only he had a God-given mission to dispense justice. If the Czar was bad, he could be forced to be good, he could even be replaced by a better Czar; also, one could combat the functionaries and hangers-on who distorted the Czar's justice. But society without the Czar was unthinkable: the family could not exist without its head.

It was the Populists, as Venturi explains, who first undermined this atavistic loyalty. The Populist thesis held that the precondition of justice was the *elimination* of the Czar and of the whole hierarchical system depending on him. They thus put the political question—who is morally entitled to rule the society?—first and foremost. This priority remained unchanged for all radical left groupings that followed—including the Marxists.

For it seems to me clear that the Bolsheviks' revolutionary strategy was guided, not by the idea of the class struggle, but by the idea of the capture of governmental power. This is why the strategy was effective. In great revolutions, what takes place is not one class combatting another, but a combination of elements from the different classes attacking a ruling center. Such an attack will succeed where there is a general consensus—regardless of the conflict of class interests—that the existent top authority has no moral claim to represent the society. This was the consensus that crystallized in Russia during the First World War, and led to the moral isolation of the Czar and his inner ruling circle. It was the Bolsheviks who exploited the power vacuum thus created. That Czarist rule lost its legitimacy, however, was to a large extent owing to the original ferment by the Populists.

IV

TODAY, IN THE ANTI-COLONIAL revolts of our time, the central element is again lack of legitimacy: the colonial peoples deny the colonizing powers' claim to represent them. That claim, of course, had validity only within the international legal system established and maintained by the concert of the great colonizing powers themselves—the colonials had merely endured alien representation. Thus, the colonial revolt differs in its inner mechanism from the domestic revolutions of the West. It is not directed against a ruling center that purports to be representative, but against a type of rule which, in fact, operates without recognition by the subject society of its representative nature. The core of the colonial revolt is the rejection of a legal world order which discriminates between societies, granting sovereign status to some but denying it to others.

Put in these terms, the issue of colonialism versus independence seems perfectly straightforward and simple: colonial rule robs the subject society of an inherent right and hence must be rejected unconditionally. The colonizers' argument that primitive and uncivilized people cannot govern themselves is taken to be sheer cant. Primitive societies may, to be sure, lack the necessary administrative skills, and need help from the more advanced societies. But this need for help does not entitle the helpers to set themselves up as rulers. Whenever independence is claimed, it must be granted: this is the philosophy of the United Nations, fully endorsed by the United States.

Yet, if we take a closer look, the issue appears not quite so simple. It is admittedly wrong to perpetuate alien rule over societies that want to be, and can be, self-governing. But it does not therefore follow that a fair and just world order can be established by adhering simply to the rule of granting independent statehood, without further ado, to any group that demands it. Such a rule is apt to break down as different groups put forward conflicting claims. And, in any case, recognition of the sovereign status of a newly established government may fail to result in true self-government in the area under jurisdiction.

The problems involved in the transition from colonial rule to self-government are clearly and cogently discussed in *On Alien Rule and Self-Government* by John Plamenatz.* The author weighs a number of arguments for and against colonial rule. His conclusions are far from adding up to a justification of colonialism, but he does point out certain weaknesses in the unqualified anti-colonial position often put forth both by Americans and Russians. The chief error

* Longmans, Green & Co., 224 pp., $5.00.

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Plamenatz argues against is that of equating "independence" with "freedom." Can a people be free without safety of person and property, without free speech, without political democracy? Yet these are not necessarily guaranteed by independence in itself. Independence movements, once having come into power, often adopt authoritarian or totalitarian methods. Indeed, the tremendously difficult practical problems they are confronted with may leave no other course open. For one thing, the population might be too heterogeneous or backward to make genuine democracy viable. Above all, the dominant problem of underdeveloped countries, poverty, calls for tremendous efforts of development. Such efforts cannot be pushed forward at great speed, with a limited amount of foreign help, unless the society's energies are mobilized and coordinated under a strong, centralized leadership, silencing all opposition.

No total popular mobilization under dictatorial control is needed for development where slow evolutionary methods are sufficient. The problem arises only where the people are becoming progressively poorer, and there is no prospect in sight of reversing the trend without a drastic, radical operation. Now, colonial powers cannot initiate a tremendous spurt of rapid industrialization and modernization. Only a fanatical native leadership dedicated to modernization can be ruthless enough to squeeze the necessary effort out of the population. In fact, the best instrument for mobilizing the people for building up an industrial system rapidly under conditions of extreme hardship is a *socialist* ideology, which persuades the workers that they are building their own power.

This ideological approach was exploited to the hilt in Russia's and China's "premature" revolutions, and it is plausible to assume that newly independent colonial societies, too, must rely on it in tackling their own developmental tasks. One can argue (as Ulam does) that Marxian ideology is "natural" for anti-colonial revolutionaries —not, to be sure, for the reason advanced by Ulam that the revolution can win only on a wave of rural protest against the industrial way of life, but on the grounds that that ideology alone is capable of mobilizing the people for rapid development efforts. The argument looks strong at first glance; yet its validity is open to doubt.

We must realize (as the Communists do) that the first stage of colonial revolt is necessarily pluralistic. The Communists' problem is to advance from the pluralistic to the dictatorial, totalitarian stage. The historical record shows that this transition has never been effected through ideological persuasion, but—as observed so far—by means of civil war, or military occupation, or a *coup d'état* engineered conspiratorially. During the pluralistic stage, the Communists have always been forced to *deny* that they were seeking dictatorial control over the common people. The ideological instrument for mobilizing the population for developmental work could be used only *after power* was secured by other means than ideological persuasion. It would be unprecedented if people in the colonial areas were to rally en masse to the Communist elements among them, thus allowing themselves to be subjected to the patterns of the Soviet and Chinese development.

NOW IT IS TRUE that the argument from historical analogy is not always decisive: one cannot dismiss the possibility of something happening just because it has never happened before. Today, awareness of the need for rapid development is more widespread in the colonial areas than it ever was in Russia and China before the Communists took over, and the Soviet and Chinese example might call forth emulation. However, as Plamenatz points out, the bulk of the people in the underdeveloped areas simply show no eagerness to be subjected to the heroic cure for underdevelopment administered by Communists. There is no stampede to Communist banners for enrollment in the forced labor brigades. It is only the core group of fully indoctrinated local Communists that cherishes such prospects—but the world Communist leaders know that mass support cannot be enlisted on this platform. The technocratic, dictatorial elements of the Communist ideology cannot be used to generate mass consensus in the underdeveloped areas. Nationalist and national socialist ideologies are far more effective in this respect.

What this implies is not that a Communist take-over in underdeveloped areas is

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excluded as a real possibility but only that in seeking their goal, the Communists must rely on indirect and conspiratorial political methods, or armed violence in civil war. They can, for example, gain political strength in a pluralistic setting and then turn upon their gullible partners and dupes —as in Cuba—or build up a civil war potential through outside aid where geographical conditions favor this—as in Laos. It is in this way that a confluence of the anti-colonial and Marxian revolutionary currents can be effected, and not through any spontaneous rallying of the bulk of the population to the party as the agent of industrialization and modernization.

Even short of anything like a complete Communist take-over, however, a coalescence of the two currents can take place also. Such nationalist regimes as Nasser's, for example, while not Marxian in their domestic organization, are apt to align themselves with the Communist bloc in the arena of international politics. This type of coalescence poses a powerful challenge to the West—a challenge which obviously cannot be met by setting up barriers against a Communist take-over by *coup d'état,* revolution, civil war, or infiltration. Plamenatz convincingly argues that where cooperation between nationalist regimes and the great Communist powers is the problem, the West cannot protect its interests by policies defined in terms of ideological pro-Communism and anti-Communism. Bolstering sharply anti-Communist regimes, for example, is no satisfactory solution in the long run where these regimes lack a truly representative, legitimate character and stand in constant danger of being overthrown, say, by a nationalist *coup d'état* combined with a pluralistic mass upheaval. Such situations call for an elastic, indirect approach. The Communists have recognized this; they operate in a flexible and pragmatic way. Our counter-action must be equally flexible. It would be ironical in the extreme if the West, in trying to defend pluralism and freedom against the encroachment of totalitarianism, were to let itself be outmaneuvered by following a line of action dictated by ideological rigidity.

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OBSERVATIONS

A MEMOIR OF JABOTINSKY

Dan Jacobson

READING THE FIRST VOLUME OF *Rebel and Statesman: The Jabotinsky Story* by Joseph Schechtman has reminded me that it is now almost twenty-five years since I met Vladimir Jabotinsky, when in 1938 he visited our home in Kimberley, during a South African tour. I was then a boy of about eight years old; and it has become as rather a shock to me to realize that I *can* remember something which happened well over twenty years ago. And much of it I can remember vividly, for it was my first meeting with anyone whom I knew to be without question a great man. My father had told me many times how great a man Jabotinsky was.

The program—as I remember it—for Jabotinsky's stay in Kimberley was that he was to arrive on the morning plane from Johannesburg, that he would be met by a small reception committee at the airport, and then come to our house for lunch. In the evening he was to address a public meeting in the Town Hall; he was to leave the next day for Cape Town. Kimberley is a small town, and no doubt Jabotinsky did not attach any special importance to his stay there; indeed, for the children in our family the awareness of our own unimportance helped to intensify our gratification at his visit. Nothing ever happened in Kimberley, we knew; yet it was to Kimberley that Jabotinsky was coming! And not merely to Kimberley, but to our own workaday commonplace house, which in its very familiarity was the obvious antithesis of anything which might have the name of greatness.

And in expectation of Jabotinsky's arrival, the house itself became less familiar. It was cleaned, swept, scrubbed; the lawns were mown and watered and the flowerbeds were turned over; the front *stoep* and the cement path that led to the garden-gate were dyed with a special red substance which was brought to a high polish by the African houseboy. In the kitchen a new dinner service was unpacked out of straw and paper, and the back yard was swept and raked. My father and mother discussed at length the menu for lunch, and John the houseboy and Martha the cook-girl were coached again and again in the serving of the meal. We had had visitors before whom my parents had been anxious to please, even some Zionist notabilities among them, but never before had the preparations been quite so elaborate, and never before had my father been as meticulous about them as he was for this visit. To me all this seemed not in the least surprising, for, as I can remember telling Martha, "The man who is coming here has talked to *kings*."

What kings, if any, Jabotinsky had talked to I do not know: perhaps I will learn from the second volume of Mr. Schechtman's biography. At the time I did not bother to ask. It was enough for me to know that a man who had talked to kings was to talk to me and my brothers, and to my parents, and even perhaps to Martha. Our house shone for the visit; I wished that dusty, drab Kimberley would do the same. But I knew it never would. The burden of meeting the luminary with light was all our own.

In fact, the burden of greeting Jabotinsky was all my father's. So far as the New Zionist Organization—as Jabotinsky's movement was known—had a branch in Kimberley, it was my father. There were a few other "New Zionists" or "Revisionists" in the town, but their adherence to the movement was lukewarm, whereas my father's was passionate. I suppose the differences between the "New" and the "Old" Zionists are pretty much forgotten by now, even among Zionists; but twenty-odd years ago these differences were, in our house at least, matters of passion, of my father's passion. The Old Zionists, we were brought up to believe, were pitiable, narrow, cowardly; the New Zionists alone

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had courage and vision and understanding. The New Zionists boldly demanded not the vagueness of a "Jewish National Home" in Palestine, but nothing less than a Jewish State in an undivided country. They insisted that if the British mandatory power would not accede to this demand, then Britain had to be fought, physically if necessary, inside and outside Palestine. And if the Arabs rose in opposition to the Jews, then it was the duty of the Jews to abandon their defensive policy of *havlagah,* and lay claim to the country by the strength of their arms—not by the piety of their methods of settlement. The New Zionists campaigned too for a mass exodus of the Jewish communities in Europe, whom they declared to be threatened by imminent death. And of all this, and for all this, Jabotinsky was the instigator and spokesman.

I shall return later to these aims and claims, and will try to describe a tiny fragment of what they helped to lead to, twenty years later, with a world war, a European holocaust, a campaign of terrorism, and two brief Palestinian wars between. At the moment I merely want to say that as a result of being a follower of Jabotinsky, and holding the views described above, my father had suffered something like a minor boycott in the small Jewish community of Kimberley. He had lost those communal positions he had held before he had announced his views; he had of course resigned from the local Zionist society; and there were certain leading figures in the community who would not greet him when they passed him in the street. Out of all this my father undeniably wrung a certain satisfaction; and it is just for this reason that I cannot help wondering what would have happened to his admiration for Jabotinsky if he had known him for longer.

IN THE EVENT, JABOTINSKY'S VISIT was not an unqualified success from my father's point of view, though there was nothing that went wrong with it publicly. As I have said, the burden of organizing the visit was all his; and he carried it out efficiently enough. He was confident that Jabotinsky's name was sufficiently well known to warrant hiring the Town Hall, the biggest hall in Kimberley, and he did so; he saw to it that leaflets were printed and distributed, and that advertisements went into the local press; he arranged for the mayor of the town to greet Jabotinsky on his arrival; he inspected the room in the hotel where Jabotinsky was to stay overnight. And our own house, on the day, was all that he wanted it to be.

The whole family went out to the airport as part of the reception committee. Apart from ourselves, there were three or four fellow Revisionists who had given some help to my father, the mayor, the local rabbi, and a reporter from the Kimberley daily. Jabotinsky was the first person I had ever met who had come in an airplane, but I hardly wondered at that; it seemed to me no more than fitting that he should come from the sky, in one of those planes which were then still rare enough to be stared at when they lumbered over the town. In a way, I was less impressed by the airplane than I was by the fact that the non-Jewish mayor of the town had felt himself called upon to join in the welcome to be given to our visitor.

Jabotinsky was small; he was dressed in a gray suit with a pale stripe; he seemed calm and self-assured, and more interested in us than I had expected him to be. But what struck me most of all about him was that he had some powder on his face. It was, I suppose, some kind of talcum powder which he had put on after shaving and which he had not bothered to wipe off; but then it seemed quite mysterious to me, and not a little embarrassing. What was even more embarrassing was that the mayor could not pronounce Jabotinsky's name. The reception took place in one of the waiting-rooms of the airport, to which my father had conducted Jabotinsky from the barrier, and the little room seemed crowded by the time the mayor began to speak. He spoke hesitantly, poorly, I thought, but he went beyond what I had thought could be Kimberley's worst when he called Jabotinsky "Mr. Jabber—Jabber—Jabbersky" every time he had to say the name.

I didn't know which way to look; I tried particularly to avoid meeting the eyes of my brothers who, like myself, were scrubbed, combed, and in their best suits. But eventually I looked at Jabotinsky. To my surprise, he seemed undismayed at what the mayor was calling him; he stood calmly and gravely, his head inclined a little, listening to what was being said. Then in reply he spoke a

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few words; I can't remember what they were, but I do remember feeling a little disappointed because he spoke with a "foreign" accent, like any other Jew of his age. I believed that all Jews who were not of my generation spoke like "foreigners," but I was expecting Jabotinsky to be remarkable in every respect. He was not in this one.

IN WHAT OTHER RESPECTS HE MAY have been remarkable, I can't tell from my single meeting with him, for my memories of what passed after the reception at the airport are vague and disordered. I think that after the strain of meeting the visitor I became bored and overwhelmed, and as a result was able to take in little of what was happening around me. I know that my elder brother was so overwhelmed that no sooner did we get home than he climbed on his bicycle and simply rode away. Lunch was delayed in expectation of his return; but we ate the meal with an empty place at the table. I can remember Jabotinsky inquiring just before he left the house about my brother, and my mother assuring Jabotinsky that she was not worried, and was sure her son would be back. He was, at dusk, exhausted after his ride, and ravenously hungry. Of the lunch the only vivid recollection I have is the expression on my father's face when John served up the dessert in the wrong bowls. Later in the afternoon my father took down the photograph of Jabotinsky which hung in our living room, and removed it from its frame; Jabotinsky then inscribed the photograph in a beautifully neat hand. And for the rest I remember the unfamiliarity of the house, with its shining *stoep* and garden path, the servants glistening in their starched whites, and the talk and the smoke and the bottles and glasses in the living room, where the grown-ups gathered after the meal. I did not go to the meeting in the evening, and I did not see Jabotinsky again, after he had left the house. The meeting, I gathered the next day, had been extremely successful. Jabotinsky's name had been sufficient of a draw to more than fill the Town Hall with Jews and Gentiles, and my father was glad that he had charged an admission fee, to go to New Zionist funds, though others had advised him against it.

But Jabotinsky spent a longer time in Kimberley than he had planned to. Or rather, he spent the time near Kimberley. For after the meeting in the Town Hall he declared that he did not want to go to Cape Town the next day; he had no meeting to address there for a couple of days, and no appointments of any importance, and he thought that this would be a good opportunity for him to rest. My father, I understood, had offered him the use of our house, if he wished to leave the hotel; but Jabotinsky had declined the offer. What he wanted, he said, was to be alone, quite alone, in a small place where there would be no one at all who knew him. He wanted, he said, "to think," "to ponder on certain matters"; he wanted "two days of solitary reflection." To me the request seemed all that might be expected of a great man; it had an imperious, poetic air about it which I much admired. But my father was disconcerted; he did not understand the request, and I don't think he altogether believed in its necessity. I could not then see the reasons for my father's disapproval, but I do now. I believe he suspected Jabotinsky, his hero, his one great man, of being a little moody, a little sulky or contrary; of being determined to show his differentness from everyone who did not need two days for "solitary reflection." And as a result of the change in schedule, my father had to do much telephoning and telegraphing to Cape Town and Johannesburg.

For his two days of solitary reflection, Jabotinsky went to a little village, Barkly West, which had once been famous as the scene of the country's first great diamond rush. Barkly West is about twenty miles from Kimberley. For a South African *dorp* it is an oddly cramped little place, though it has a fine view across the Vaal river, with the rocks in the river-bed shining in the sunlight and a trickle of dark green water running between them. Along the banks of the river, for a distance of many miles, the ground was turned over into heaps by the diamond diggers, during the late 1860's; some of these artificial hillocks are still bald, others are covered with a thin growth of grass and low camelthorn trees. But for the miles upon miles of these abandoned mounds, there is hardly any sign of human achievement around Barkly West; the veld stretches uncultivated to the horizon, on all sides.

There, for two days, Jabotinsky reflected.

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TIME DESTROYS US ALL AND FORGETS us all; but it never releases the living from the compulsion to act. Jabotinsky must already have been a very sick man during his visit to Kimberley; he had really needed that rest in Barkly West, though he had been unwilling to admit (perhaps even to himself) why he had needed it. Two years later he was dead; of a heart attack, in New York.

Last year I went with my father, who is now in his middle seventies, to Israel. One of the things we did while we were there was to pay a visit to the museum, run by an Israeli political party, which records the struggle of the Irgun Zvai Leumi against the British mandatory regime. A room in the museum is set aside for relics of Vladimir Jabotinsky, for it was to him, even after his death in 1940, that the Irgun looked for inspiration. In the Jabotinsky room there are manuscripts, many photographs (one of them an enlarged copy of the photograph which had hung in our living room); in a glass case there is the uniform and ceremonial sword Jabotinsky had worn as an officer in the British army during World War I.

In the largest room there was the commemorative exhibition of the terrorist campaign, and memorials to the men who had taken part in it. There were photographs of the buildings the Irgun had blown up; models of the explosive devices which had been used; photographs of the young and middle-aged men who had lost their lives in the campaign, either in street fighting or by being hanged by the British. There was a knotted hangman's rope draped across one board; suspended from another was the collarless overall which the men had worn on the scaffold. Diffidently, proudly, or solemnly, the men in the photographs stared across these ghastly exhibits to others less ghastly. To the photographs of a crowd of people with shocked faces staring at rubble and a corpse in the street; of illegal immigrants penned behind barbed wire on a tramp steamer; of a man being carried away by two of his fellows, his backside torn open by gunfire.

The worst that Jabotinsky had prophesied for Europe had come about; the wars he had anticipated in Palestine had been fought—and won. The State, for whose realization he had expended his life, was in existence. And the museum was deserted. The whole time we were there, only one other visitor wandered into it, a bored, lonely girl with a dissatisfied expression on her face; she looked as though she were passing the time while waiting for her date to arrive. And who could be anything but glad that the people outside avoided the place, with the smell of dust heavy within it and the horrors on display on its walls? The people outside had other things to do, other interests to follow, their own lives to live. And there was no irony in the reflection that that, just that, was Jabotinsky's reward, the only certain vindication that anyone could offer on his behalf.

As we came out of the museum, it was not just the glaring sunlight and the hooting traffic which dazed and assailed me; it was my own ignorance. I remembered the visit of the great man of my childhood to Kimberley; I remembered my own incomprehension as to what the visit had been about. How much more, how much better, did I comprehend now? I knew at least what I had not known then: that time passes; that men act; that out of their acts a history is made. But to what purpose it was that we were hurled vertiginously through time and history, I knew as little as I had known in Kimberley, when I had stared in wonder and embarrassment at a small gray bespectacled man with powder on his checks and a respectful tilt of the head toward the strangers who had gathered to meet him.

DAN JACOBSON, *the novelist and short story writer, who now lives in England, writes frequently for* COMMENTARY. *His "Return to South Africa" appeared in our issue of July 1960. Mr. Jacobson's book on his travels in America,* No Further West, *was recently issued in this country by Macmillan.*

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CONTROVERSY

ALGERIAN INDEPENDENCE & THE JEWS

The discussion we present this month grew out of the companion articles on "Algeria & the Fifth Republic" which appeared in our January issue: RAY ALAN'S *"The Political Crisis" and* JOSEPH BARRY'S *"The Moral Crisis."* SAMUEL L. BLUMENFELD—*the editor of Grosset and Dunlap's University Library and secretary for the American Committee on France and Algeria—here comments on both articles; replies by Mr. Alan and Mr. Barry follow. This exchange was completed before the recent uprising of the Generals in Algeria.*

Mr. Blumenfeld writes:

Both Ray Alan and Joseph Barry are guilty of strictly partisan viewpoints and grave errors of omission in their articles on France and the Algerian proglem.

Mr. Alan's main purpose—to begin with him—is to discredit anything remotely pro-French Algerian. His primary sources of information are leftist Mendès-France circles around *L'Express, France-Observateur,* and *Le Monde*. He writes as a partisan of the "defeatist" Mendès position, using its vocabulary, repeating its prejudices, believing its myths, and desiring its goals. To say that de Gaulle was brought to power by "right-wing plotters and demagogues" is to reduce to a totally incomprehensible and simple cliché the Revolution of May 13, the most significant regenerative event in French history since the 1940 defeat. To refer constantly to the second- and third-generation Europeans of Algeria as "settlers" is as unjust as calling their immigrant counterparts in America anything less than Americans. To refer constantly to the Europeans of Algeria as "right-wingers" is as unjust as labeling all Zionists "right-wingers" because they do not follow the standard left-wing line on Arab nationalism. Nor is *Algérie Française* any more a "settler slogan," as Mr. Alan labels it, than is *Shema Yisroel* a Zionist one. *Algérie Française* happens to mean "life" to millions of people threatened with ultimate destruction.

But the most perfidious portion of Mr. Alan's article is his footnote on anti-Semitism. He writes: "Israel is still fairly popular with the moderate right which dislikes Jews but welcomes any stick with which to scare the Arabs; she has lost friends during the last year in liberal circles which criticize Ben Gurion for his intransigent Arabophobia (understandable, surely) and his friendship with men like M. Soustelle and M. Gilbert (a former French ambassador to Israel whom the fascist-minded Jeunesses Socialistes Patriotes claim as a supporter)." For the last two years I have followed the French press, particularly the publications of the so-called "moderate right" quite closely, and I have found nothing but sincere friendship for Israel and genuine concern for the fate of the Jews in Algeria. Jacques Soustelle is well known as a long and faithful friend of the Jewish people and is one of the strongest advocates of a Franco-Israeli alliance of which Israel would be the primary benefactor. Mr. Gilbert, who served long and well as France's envoy to Israel, is one of Israel's staunchest friends in France. To imply that he has fascist leanings of any sort is a base attempt to defame him before a Jewish audience. If Mr. Alan is looking for anti-Semitism in the Algerian conflict, he'll find his fill of it in the ranks of the FLN, which last December in Algiers staged one of the worst pogroms since World War II. The Cairo-Moscow-Peiping-supported FLN has made no secret as to what the fate of the Jews will be in Algeria and elsewhere once it seizes power.

One could find much more to criticize in Mr. Alan's article. The things he says are bad enough. But what of all the sins of omission? What about the FLN and its recent open espousal of the Communist bloc?

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What about Nasser's role in the Algerian war? What about the problem of NATO which so troubles military circles in the West? What about Algeria and the struggle between East and West? What about the role of Communist subversion? All of this Mr. Alan avoids discussing; for if he did, I imagine, he might have to get down to some hard thinking on some difficult questions. It is all very well to describe M. Soustelle as scurrying about hatching plots, which unfortunately he is *not* doing; it might have been better to let the readers know why there is a war in Algeria in the first place.

IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT to write a more biased article than Ray Alan's, but Joseph Barry has succeeded. Mr. Barry's article is mainly devoted to eulogizing the glamorous 121 left-wing intellectuals who signed the now famous Manifesto sanctioning desertion from the French army. To American intellectuals this Manifesto may seem like a perfectly wonderful and heroic gesture in defiance of militarism, colonialism, and all other evils. In France, however, the consensus was quite different. One hundred and twenty-one intellectuals, no matter how famous, do not represent a nation. Treason is treason, even if the traitor is Jean-Paul Sartre or Simone Signoret. As much as I admire Mme. Signoret as an actress, I do not admire her as a political thinker. She and many other of the signers have long been identified with Communist causes.

Again, the usual omissions. Much ado about army tortures, but no mention of FLN terror, cutthroating, blackmail, etc., which have been going on during this period at a stepped-up pace with considerable casualties. No mention of Ferhat Abbas's final solution to the Algerian Jewish question. Nothing but the glorification of 121 traitors to their country whose intellectual dishonesty is only too evident in the wording of the Manifesto itself: "We respect and consider justified the conduct of Frenchmen who deem it their duty to help and protect Algerians oppressed in the name of the French people."

What I would like to know is to which oppressed Algerians does the Manifesto refer —the 200,000 or so serving loyally in the French army, the 1,200,000 European Algerians who have as much right to call themselves Algerians as anyone else, or the Algerian Moslems who sit as equals with their fellow Frenchmen in the National Assembly in Paris? The truth of the matter is that the oppressed Algerians whom the 121 signers are so concerned about are the cutthroats and their leaders in Cairo and Tunis —who spare neither women nor children, who have inflicted more casualties on the Moslem population than the European, who have staged pogroms against innocent Jews living among Moslems, and whose ultimate aim is to push the Europeans into the sea and destroy the hundreds of thousands of Moslems who for seven years have loyally served their country, the French Republic.

Anyone who has more than a superficial knowledge of the tactics and goals of world Communism and its Arab nationalist allies will understand what the Algerian war is all about. For Jews this is of particular significance, since, whether they realize it or not, the ultimate fate of Israel hinges on the eventual outcome of the Algerian conflict. The Russian goal, of course, is to outflank NATO by setting up tactical bases on the North African coast. These bases are the price Ferhat Abbas will pay for Soviet support. The Arab nationalist goal, of course, is the consolidation of the Arab "homeland" from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic. This can only be accomplished by expelling France from Algeria. At the same time, Nasser is anxious to deprive France of the Saharan oil, for it is this oil which has made France free of Middle East blackmail.

Once France is defeated in North Africa, the Arab world will then turn its entire attention to its primary enemy, Israel. At this point, Israel will be in an almost defenseless position. The "liberals" in France, having appeased Arab nationalism in Algeria, will certainly then be disposed to appease the Arabs once more by depriving Israel of military aid. It should be noted that it was France's aid which made the Sinai compaign possible, and it is French aid today which is enabling Israel to develop an atomic potential. Ray Alan has already reported dissatisfaction with Israel among French "liberals" because of Ben Gurion's friendship with Soustelle and his "Arabophobia." These same "liberals" and the 121 signers, who are so ready to sacrifice millions of Algerian Frenchmen to appease Arab

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nationalism, will certainly not spare the two million Israel "settlers" or *ultras* with their "slogan" *Eretz Yisroel.* Zionism is already synonomous with Western colonialism and imperialism in leftist circles, and certainly Messrs. Mendès-France, Servan-Schreiber, and the rest will exert pressure on Israel to accept the "liberal" solution to the Arab-Israel question—that is, a return to the original boundaries of the United Nations partition and the admission of the one million Arab refugees who will have waited so long, but not in vain. And how will Israel be able to resist pressure from the Arab and Communist coalition, pressure from French "liberals," pressure from the "neutralists," and, finally, pressure from the Kennedy administration?

This is the future as it is now developing with terrifying speed, thanks to de Gaulle's "vision, courage, liberalism, etc." Ben Gurion or his successor will be expected to show the same kind of courage and liberalism—by employing the Israeli army to force the Israelis to accept extermination, just as de Gaulle is now doing with the French army in Algeria in regard to the Europeans.

Mr. Alan replies:

It would be too easy to throw Mr. Blumenfeld's puerile abuse back in his face: to accuse him of being a dupe of the neo-fascist French right, whose publications and activities are very largely financed by Algerian settler organizations. His style, his vocabulary, and his particular substitute for logic approximate strikingly those of the fascist weekly *Rivarol*: only the anti-Semitic caricatures are missing. His description of the squalid Algiers riot of May 13, 1958, as "the most significant regenerative event in French history since the 1940 defeat," is pure *Rivarol.* Indeed, this single phrase strips him naked and reveals just where his political sympathies lie.

The purpose of the footnote Mr. Blumenfeld objects to was to bring up to date readers of my earlier COMMENTARY articles in which the subject had been mentioned. The footnote began: "Like anti-Americanism, anti-Semitism is less strident than two years ago, possibly because of the eclipse of the *ultras'* principal *bête noire,* M. Pierre Mendès-France." It then continued: "Israel is still fairly popular . . ." etc. I see no reason to modify it, and Mr. Blumenfeld is apparently incapable of producing so much as one contradictory fact. I did not state that what Mr. Blumenfeld describes as "the publications of the so-called moderate right" (whatever the "so-called moderate right" may be) were hostile to Israel or the Algerian Jews: that is his own red herring. I did not accuse M. Soustelle of anti-Semitism; I recorded simply that some French liberals had been alienated by Mr. Ben Gurion's friendship with him (the popular *Canard Enchaîné,* which outsells all the pro-Soustelle papers, published a criticism of Mr. Ben Gurion on this score recently). I did not assert that M. Gilbert is a fascist: I noted only that the Jeunesses Socialistes Patriotes claim him as a supporter—a statement which has since appeared in the French press without contradiction (so far I know).

I was not "looking for anti-Semitism in the Algerian conflict"—and I did not mention "the problem of NATO," Nasser, Uncle Tom Cobley, and all—for the self-evident reason that the subject of my article, printed in clear black type on page 14, was "Political Crisis in France." My views on Nasser and the more unsavory aspects of Arab nationalism, formulated in the course of years of residence and travel in every Arab state between the Atlantic and the Tigris, are well known to readers of COMMENTARY, and I doubt if I have many lessons in the subject to receive from Mr. Blumenfeld, whose qualifications I do not know (I can only hope that they are a little more substantial than his qualifications for discussing France). If, however, Mr. Blumenfeld sincerely wishes to know my views on the situation of the Algerian Jews, I will do my best to outline them briefly.

I believe that the developments in Algeria illustrate once more the validity of the Zionist thesis. If I thought that Zionism involved the emigration to Israel of all American and Western European Jews, I should be anti-Zionist: their departure would be a calamity for Western civilization, their loss—culturally and morally—irreparable. But for the Jews of politically and culturally unstable countries like Algeria and Morocco, Zionism is an essential lifeline. Twenty years ago it was the largely pro-Vichyite Europeans of Algeria who were anti-Jewish (even Mr. Blumenfeld must

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have heard of Pétain's abrogation of the Crémieux decrees), and I personally know of several heartening instances of wartime Moslem-Jewish solidarity in Algiers. Today the Moslems, worked up by Nasserist and Communist radio propaganda, tend to be anti-Jewish. Tomorrow the Algerian Jews will be an all too convenient scapegoat for whoever—European or Moslem—is in need of one. (The conversion of European right-wingers in Algeria to the idea of an anti-Arab "alliance with the Jews" is as superficial and as opportunistic as their belated, ephemeral advocacy of "integration" and "fraternization" with the Moslems in 1958–59. The Catholic review *Esprit* has warned of the danger of a resurgence of anti-Semitism in France when the Algerian war is over, adding, "The Jews are the only people who are not expecting it.") The Algerian Jews would, surely, be wise to keep an equal distance from both extremist camps, to press for the most explicit guarantees of their rights in the constitution of the Algerian republic—and to maintain the closest possible contact with such Zionist organizations as may be able to come to their aid at short notice if the need arises.

Mr. Barry replies:

In the sense that the 121 who signed the manifesto are no more popular in France than was Thoreau in his America when he damned the Mexican War and went to jail for his civil disobedience, Mr. Blumenfeld is right. They would not be elected as deputies; that was not their goal. What they aimed at—and achieved—was to stir French conscience awake to the moral cost of a dirty, unjust war. Their act contributed to de Gaulle's decision to negotiate peace, for he, too, is one of France's intellectuals.

As for terrorism on the part of the Algerian rebels, should the British have practiced torture on the Irish and Jews when these people also resorted to terrorism as a revolutionary tactic during their wars for liberation? And if the British officially countenanced torture of suspects because of the terrorism they themselves were subject to, what should have been the role of the British intellectual of conscience? In other words, does the white man scalp Indians in reprisal? And do his civilized fellow white men say he should? Terrorism is decried by many of the 121, but being French they believe they must be heard on French practices dishonoring France. (Personally I detest the FLN's use of terrorism. What does Mr. Blumenfeld say of Jewish terrorism in Palestine before independence?)

That is sheer nonsense about Abbas's "final solution to the Algerian question." There is some basis for expecting that his attitude, when he is in power in Algeria, will be similar to that of Bourguiba's in Tunisia—which the Israeli Embassy, here in Paris at least, cannot fault.

Nationalism, Einstein said, is the measles of mankind. Of all nationalisms rampant, one of the least appealing to me is the Arab's. In Algeria, the Jews had a cruel choice (assuming most couldn't identify themselves with the Algerian state-to-be, as have *some* Jews and a good number of more liberal Algerian-born Frenchmen, among whom is Jules Roy and *Express's* Algerian-Jewish-French correspondent, Jean Daniel). They could choose the new Algerian nationalism with the risk that Jews would not have the freedom they had under traditional French rule. (I emphasize *traditional.*) Or they could choose Algerian French nationalism (which is not de Gaulle's more noble variety, but the transplanted nationalism of men like Malan in South Africa). Actually, those who cry *Algérie Française* in France and Algeria are generally those who write "Death to the Jews" on the walls. Their nationalism, perhaps because it's the nationalism of a minority against another race's majority, is fascist and racist. If they had succeeded in keeping Algeria French, it would have meant the end of *traditional* France and the freedom for individuals and minorities. Besides being the former Pétainists and Vichyites who applied Nazi regulations against Jews in Algeria during the Occupation (when Mohammed V of Morocco refused, by the way), their victory and rule in France and Algeria would have doomed the Jews in a nationalism as rabid as Nasser's, no matter what Soustelle says or does to prove he is not an anti-Semite. It seems to me Algerian Jews have but one choice—and the hope that the new Algeria will be another Tunisia and not another Egypt. That would be my own choice, Mr. Blumenfeld seems to choose otherwise.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

The Symposium—I

To the Editor of Commentary:

May a middle-aged German Jew, who spent some of his formative years in what was then called Palestine, offer a few random thoughts on the symposium, "Jewishness and the Younger Intellectuals," in your April number?

As a non-combatant member of a now somewhat shrunken army of survivors from Central Europe, I am impressed by the confident manner assumed by the majority of the participants. Doubtless it is well founded. One would not wish to dispute the underlying assumption that American democracy is, and will remain, immune to the particular poisons which helped to wreck large parts of Europe. (In this connection one should always remember that Germany effectively committed suicide as a nation when it elevated Hitler to power.) All the same, it seems a trifle incautious on the part of some of the contributors to take it for granted that the Jewish problem as such has already disappeared, or is on the way to final extinction. These celebrations are premature. "Anti-Semitism"—a polite circumlocution for something that few people care to call by its true name—has older and tougher cultural roots (notably of the theological kind) than modern agnostics are willing to grant. Enlightened themselves, they readily attribute a corresponding degree of enlightenment to others. The German Jews were not guiltless of this fallacy. At the risk of being misunderstood, one feels like uttering a note of caution. It is reasonable to suppose that the residual latent hostility toward Jews will gradually become sufficiently attenuated to count for no more than the slight surviving animosities between the various Christian denominations within the national community. But surely things have not yet quite reached this stage even in the United States? One may applaud the hope without necessarily sharing the belief that its realization is imminent.

This leads me to another, and possibly less important, point: it must be my inherited—though by now rather diluted—pro-Zionism which makes me regret the tone adopted by some of the writers toward Israel. Objectivity and detachment are praiseworthy; callousness and obtuseness are rather less admirable. One or two of the contributors give the impression of being anxious to strike "progressive" poses at the expense of the only Jewish community which has successfully attained sovereign status (and correspondingly incurred the wrath of rival national entities). There is also, in some of these utterances, a hint of the old familiar craving after self-inflicted guilt and punishment. Ethical perfection is demanded from Israel (but not, significantly, from America). There is an assumption that the Israelis are under an obligation to live up to the moral standards of the writers, who for their part are safely ensconced in their various academic jobs. To my mind Mr. Michael Maccoby takes the prize for this kind of pretentious asininity, but some of the others are not far behind. Thus Mr. Ned Polsky, who also advertises a fascinating cocktail of Trotsky, Freud, and Nietzsche—rather reminiscent of my own private *Weltanschauung* when I was seventeen, but surely at thirty-two he is too old for this kind of thing?—serves warning that unless Israel conforms to his political program of the moment (what will it be next year, or the year after?), it might as well disappear from the map. Aside from being a notable tribute to the enduring strength of infantile leftism, this is a piece of impertinence. The Israelis are under no obligation to commit suicide for Mr. Polsky's benefit. Regrettably, even Mr. Andrew Hacker—who otherwise sounds sensible—tortures himself quite needlessly with qualms over the damage done to Colonel Nasser's political ambitions by the existence of the Jewish state. But why should not the Egyptian regime be left to cope with its self-inflicted expansionist problems unaided? And why does Mr. Hacker suppose that letting Nasser loose on Black Africa is going to benefit the local inhabitants?

I have purposely concentrated on one or two matters which happen to be relevant to my own interests. More could be said about other curious features of this symposium—e.g., the surprising worship of the new three-headed deity: Marx-Freud-Ein-

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stein. As a German Jew (and a part-time student of Marxism) I feel duly flattered, but also a trifle uneasy at what seems to me a manifestation of collective self-congratulation. The thinkers in question—not that Einstein was much of a thinker outside his specialty—belong to the dead world of German Jewry. It is a mistake to suppose that one can go on warming onself at this fire.

On the whole—if I may be allowed to conclude on a personal note—I rather prefer the women contributors to the men. They seem to write out of a deeper level of concern and emotional awareness. If I had a prize to bestow I should present it to Mrs. Barbara Probst Solomon. One may not quite agree with her belief that Jews are uniquely defined by their religion (and its gradual erosion), but it is impossible not to sense that her kind of seriousness is proper to the subject matter, and that it comes out of something rather more intensely felt than the snap judgments of other writers. Some of them tend to adopt a whimsical tone which (one cannot help feeling) is more appropriate to lectures on English literature. Perhaps it is part of the inevitable process of acculturation. I can only say that I find Mrs. Solomon's attitude more sympathetic.

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

London, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The symposium in the April 1961 issue prompts me to write in dismay and wonderment regarding the editorial policy which sanctioned and, indeed, favored the method of choice of authors.

As you know, Judaism has never frowned upon the knowledgeable agnostic, but our sages have refused to honor comment from individuals with a weak background in the philosophy of Jewish ethos. Moreover, those who have never participated as adults in ritual or other traditional manifestations of Judaic social and religious structure cannot be called upon to judge the ultimate effect of these customs in home and synagogue. The scrupulous care which the editors of COMMENTARY have taken to avoid (except in one instance) authors who have a moderately satisfactory background in the field that they chose to analyze shows an appalling lack of insight as to who is worthy of criticism and who has not earned that right.

In this period of American Jewish development when so many otherwise gifted adults have only an adolescent's understanding of their faith, we are blessed with a group of brilliant and unusually young Jewish intellectuals who have both emotional and mental maturity. Not one of these young men of stature was included in your symposium. . . . Apparently the COMMENTARY editorial board felt that they had been contaminated too much by a prolonged and meaningful exposure to positive Jewish values.

ALFRED SOFFER, M. D.

Rochester, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read the symposium of the younger intellectuals with much interest. It seemed to me to reflect a very high order of thoughtfulness; and I was heartened by the tone of idealism that ran through almost all of the contributions. In that respect, these young men are not far removed from their predecessors of ten or twenty years ago. The emphasis upon the ethical and moral values of their tradition rather than upon any narrow traditional or national view of it was most encouraging. And the leaders of our communal organizations might well make the effort to understand the significance of this indication of where the concerns of American Jews really lie.

OSCAR HANDLIN

Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The fifty pages which you have devoted to the answers in the symposium were so much wasted space. The reason for this is simply that the men and women to whom you sent the questions are, by their own admission, not competent to answer questions about God, the Jewish people, or Israel. The thirty men and women (one of them does not really belong to that group) know no Hebrew, have studied no Yiddish, have no access to the literatures in these languages, and know nothing of Jewish history. They have not lived with Jewish problems, have not meditated on them, and have not lost a single night's sleep over them. How can they be considered experts on matters Jewish, and how did the editor of COMMENTARY presume to hear expert opinions from them?

Their views, whether they admit it or not, are exactly the views held by American Jewish upper-middle-class men on whom the intellectuals look down with so much contempt. . . . .

I admit that we ought to hang our heads in shame. These are the products of our

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schools. We had them "Bar Mitzvah'd." But this does not excuse COMMENTARY from taking their opinions as if they were Torah from Mount Sinai.

BERYL SEGAL

Providence, Rhode Island

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The April symposium (which might have been subtitled "Thirty-one couches—No waiting!") is likely to be a collector's item. Where but in COMMENTARY is to be found such searching self-examination? Where, I might ask further, but in a religion whose resilience has stood the test of time?

IRVING B. ZEICHNER

Atlantic Highlands, N. J.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found the symposium in your April issue one of the most fascinating pieces ever carried. . . . But what a picture it made. I learned things. I learned that the ivory tower is more inaccessible than I'd thought. The many contributors who are involved in the academic life seem to be living in an America I don't know. It is an America with hardly any anti-Semitism, where Jews are just like everybody else. . . . It just isn't my world. No synagogue markings, no job discrimination, no exclusive country clubs, no social exclusion, and no special contributions to America . . . no holidays and family gatherings and feasts, no group dinners and charity theater parties and fund-raising dinners, no pride in Israeli accomplishments, no horror at the greatest and most incredible inhumanity against the Jews in our lifetime.

Are intellectuals supposed to be a mirror of their society? Not these, if they are indeed our intellectuals. Are they leaders? Where will they lead us? To mock the conformity of others? And ignore their own? The contributors were as much in contact with the real world as guests at a cellar Greenwich Village cocktail party in July.

How about a symposium of your non-intellectual readers?

DAVID GROSSBERG

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . . I am writing because I fear that you must be receiving angered letters on your symposium and I wish to say "Bravo!" and to thank you in my own name and the names of many of my fellow congregants for bringing this challenge before us. . . . You have made a fundamental contribution by stirring your readers and the rabbis to think now, *and with a common point of reference,* about the problems Jews face today. The reactions of the symposium participants are, I am sure, the reactions of a huge segment of American Jewry. Because of their intellectual background they were able to express their answers dramatically and almost always with clarity.

They represent to me, a concerned layman—and should represent to the rabbinate—a challenge. What are we to do to stop the unconscious assimilation of American Jews today, and how may Judaism realize its potential of relevance and creative power in our lives? . . .

(MRS.) JOSEPHINE KILLMAN

White Plains, N. Y.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The symposium is an enlightening self-dissection by thirty-one individuals who happen to be Jewish—but I can't convince myself that the end result is anything like an accurate barometer of what young Jewish intellectuals think about their Jewishness.

For one thing, of course, you chose not to include religious Jews, and thereby produced a horribly distorted image of the group I think you were attempting to portray. There is certainly no dearth of "successful" young intellectuals, in many fields, who are observant Jews and who could still give stimulating answers to your questions. . . . .

You also neglect the large middle group for whom Judaism is not a matter of "either ritual or moral principle" (a view common to many of your writers) but rather a more realistic and historically true amalgam of both—and more. The people I speak of are aware that "the conventional groupings are on the way out"—but they don't view this as a signal to loose all religious, national, and cultural ties, be they American, Jewish, or anything else. This group, in short, does not believe that the last-act curtain has been rung down—and is willing to grapple with the problems faced in learning to live as a good Jew, a good American, and a good citizen of the world, 1961. . . .

RUTH ROUTTENBERG

Rockville Centre, N. Y.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I don't think you quite realize what you have served up in your symposium on "Jewishness and the Younger Intellectuals." I find the stench sickening. . . . Surely, it takes a much stronger stomach than mine

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to appraise this mess with such optimism as you expressed in your Introduction.

It could, at least, be said for most of the inverted snobs who participated in the 1944 symposium that they were subsequently affected enough by the experience of the extermination camps and the birth of the State of Israel in agonizing labor pains to reaffirm their identity as Jews. This was, after all, a stunning reversal for consecrated assimilationists of a bygone innocent era. With our new generation of intellectual leaders, however, we are back where we started seventeen years and more ago, except that now we have a bunch of passive assimilationists who find cover under the old "universal" ideals, which are safely and comfortably bourgeois today. . . . Characteristically, I find one chicken-soup writer badgering me with the question of why I insist on claiming to be his close relation. To this I can only reply that, as far as I'm concerned, it's time already to stop with the same question. *Nu,* so we're not related, and I don't have to read what you write about my contemptible kind. . . . .

I could go down a list of twenty-four of the symposium participants to enumerate statements of shock and insult to me, which suggest that the same measure of self-hatred and impotence motivates the emancipated and accepted young Jewish intellectual today as was operative among his rebellious elders in the radical 30's. However, while I think you are very wrong in your assessment of the nature and portent of the current situation, I do applaud you for having done the good service of bringing it to light.

MURRAY J. FINK
San Fernando, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The symposium was fascinating reading and promises to be one of the most provocative and controversial issues to hit the American Jewish community in 1961.

The participants are to be commended for their frankness. Their flight from Jewish values will give secular and religious leaders of our Jewish communal organizations much to reflect on in the days ahead as to their failure to attract so many of our creative young people.

In all fairness, however, it must be pointed out that in many respects the replies were predictable in view of the weighted sampling utilized in the symposium. Writers and university faculty members generally do not belong to any community, Jewish or non-Jewish, other than their own narrow group. The wall between "town and gown" is still impregnable, and writers who are not affiliated with universities all too often isolate themselves both physically and spiritually from the rest of their ordinary brothers. . . .

IRVING BERNSTEIN
Beverly Hills, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The symposium will serve for a long time as material for the study of the typology of the intellectual, his function in the Jewish community, and his role as spokesman for a Jewish point of view—because regardless of his own stand he is identified as a Jew by non-Jews.

True, some of the contributors could well fit into the much needed counterpart of the psychiatric classic, *Der Juedische Selbsthass,* by the martyr Theodore Lessing. The repetition of what has become a standard anti-Semitic intellectual accusation against Judaism as the source of racism, and the obvious ignoring of the problem of genocide in the Arab-Israeli relations, are clear indications of ignorance of Jewish history. . . .

The alienated and the hostile have always been with us since the Emancipation. It is nevertheless difficult not to challenge the right of intellectuals to give opinions in fields where their education has been neglected, and where their only competence is an emotional attitude, surely no criterion for molding intelligent public opinion.

ABRAHAM G. DUKER
President, The College of Jewish Studies
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If only you could find five more young intellectuals of the same caliber, we would have a brand new modern version of the Lamed Vov (the legendary thirty-six saints upon whom the world rests).

As it is, thirty-one is highly significant. In Hebrew, this number is represented by *Lamed Alef,* which may constitute the words *Lo* and *El*—no God.

Since none seems to find value in the Jewish concept of God, logic is on the side of those respondents who are not waiting for their children to convert, but disclaim any connection with Jews themselves.

(RABBI) SOLOMON WEINBERGER
Passaic, N. J.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was disturbed by most of the responses to the symposium—their shallowness and cool and detached posture. I found partic-

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ularly disturbing, as you did in your Introduction, the fact that for the contributors there were no or few "areas that are sacred," and so few "demands before which the only proper attitude is piety or reverence."

I found missing from the contributions a recognition of what seems to me the important truth: that perhaps the most genuine path to the universality of spirit to which the "Younger Intellectuals" seem so strongly to aspire, is a deep commitment to a concrete and even parochial set of ennobling values and beliefs. . . .

A man's spirit (I am speaking here not of Man, but of Unamuno's "man of flesh and blood") always has a historical context. A man's identity always grows out of concrete experiences and heritages. It does not develop in the emotional vacuum of detached critical analysis and ratiocination. Perhaps the "Younger Intellectuals" cannot affirm Judaism, but they must, I believe, affirm something of great depth of spirit. Being good liberals for minority groups and the underprivileged is not, I am afraid, going to be enough for the largeness of their own spirits.

MORRIS EAGLE

Department of Psychology
New York University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . . We are sure that this disturbing and challenging symposium will provoke considerable and widespread comment and discussion. This is a genuine contribution to American Jewish thought.

LEWIS COREN

Chairman, Adult Jewish
Education Committee
Temple Sinai
Philadelphia, Pa.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . . To say that I am not surprised at the answers in the symposium would be an understatement. Anyone interested in Jewish life has been saddened by the alienation of the Jewish intellectual—or more correctly —the intellectual who happens to be Jewish. . . . Are there no Jewish intellectuals at all who are happy with their Judaism and who take a positive attitude to things Jewish and who are active in the Jewish community? I know a number of such, who teach in universities and who write books and who are on a par with the ones you have chosen. Furthermore, if one is a rabbi or a teacher in a Jewish institution, but has never published in *Partisan Review* or the *New Yorker,* does he thereby cease to be a young Jewish intellectual? Where, in the name of heaven, is the distinction?

I believe that your choice is blatantly biased and gives a false picture of the real situation. . . . There is one consolation—these are not the people to whom we are looking for the future of the Jewish community. Like Mordecei, I say, "Relief and deliverance will arise to the Jews from another place" (Est. 4:19).

(RABBI) ISAAC KLEIN

Temple Emanu-El
Buffalo, N. Y.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Your symposium confirms what I have always suspected. The insolence of ignorance is far better than the arrogance of intellect. To me, the innocence of belief is still the essence of creation.

DANIEL SPICEHANDLER

New York, N. Y.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Let me congratulate you on your "Jewishness and the Younger Intellectuals." If I find this symposium truly challenging, and indeed a veritable document, it is because it is composed of forthright statements made by gifted, reflective, and sensitive people. True, one is depressed because so few of the contributors have found it necessary to seek any real knowledge of Judaism; one is disturbed because so many—capable of deep probing into other aspects of existence—seem incapable of deep probing into their Jewishness, the kind which might have aroused a desire for knowledge of Judaism; and one is positively exasperated to find that some (such as Judith Jarvis) should, lack of knowledge of, or acquaintance with Judaism notwithstanding, presume to make ex-cathedra pronouncements on Judaism.

But it would be the gravest mistake for committed Jews simply to dismiss the symposium for these reasons, and smugly to assume that it presents no challenge. If in our time sensitive and gifted intellectuals, caring enough about their Jewishness to reply to your query, do not or cannot probe deeply enough into their Jewishness to come anywhere and in any way face to face with Judaism, this is itself something to be faced and thought about. And if some of their number—people who would never dream of making ex-cathedra judgments on philosophy or American literature without a thorough knowledge of the subject—do not hesi-

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tate to make such judgments on Judaism, then this too is something to be faced and thought about. In short, by virtue of their forthrightness even those contributors who speak from outside of Judaism have managed to hold up some kind of mirror before American Judaism.

What is more, some of the contributors probe very deeply indeed into their Jewishness; and not all speak from outside Judaism. Contributors such as Hugh Nissenson and Malcolm Diamond have raised some of the central questions with which modern Judaism must cope, if it is not to degenerate into either mere middle-class smugness or escapist romanticism.

EMIL L. FACKENHEIM
Department of Philosophy
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada

[*A second group of letters on the symposium will appear next month*—Ed.]

"Fortune" and America

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Lewis A. Coser's review (in February) of *America in the Sixties*, a collection of articles by "the Editors of Fortune," carries on at some length about "the Luce mind" and "the 'midtown view' of economic realities." I would be inclined to let him have some innocent downtown fun with these subjects except that he seems unable to have it without misrepresenting almost everything the editors (myself especially) actually said. Throughout his review he has relentlessly satirized our formulations, or restated them without our qualifications, or simply misstated them altogether, always making them seem foolishly optimistic; then matched them against some very pessimistic (sometimes very dubious) figures of his own; and, finally, used the contrast to prove our "willed commitment to a roseate view of the future." He has also taxed us for not mentioning a number of unpleasant facts like the low operating rate in steel since mid-1960, though how we could have mentioned such facts in a series of articles written in 1959 (as the introduction states), or *why* we should have mentioned them in a book dealing with the decade as a whole, is very unclear to me.

In one characteristic passage, Mr. Coser writes that the authors of *America in the Sixties* are "momentarily brought up short when they consider the high divorce rates of the postwar years. But they console themselves by reflecting that the many divorces can be explained by the high level of income: in earlier years 'a lot of Americans simply could not afford them.' In the prosperous sixties, no doubt we shall all be able to afford a second divorce along with a second car and a second television set. Cheer up, boys!" Since Mr. Coser is manifestly laboring to be satirical in this passage, your readers would be entitled to assume that he has something to satirize, i.e., that our "willed commitment" had led us to write a passage arguing that the high divorce rate really showed the U.S. in a good light—or something equally fatuous. But we didn't write anything of the sort. In a discussion of the phenomenon of teen-age marriages, we dropped a footnote raising the question whether these were responsible for the high level of divorces, concluding that the evidence for this view was not very good—and suggesting a connection between more divorces and higher incomes. This connection is not exactly a new idea—the sharp drop in divorces during the depression has frequently been noted. In any event, the notion we were "brought up short" by the divorce figures, or felt in need of consolation after viewing them, is Mr. Coser's own fantasy.

He summarizes another section of our book like this: "*Fortune* writes that soon the poor will no longer be with us; and in the meantime 'only' 3,600,000 families have incomes under $2,000, and if a family makes over $2,000, it cannot 'really' be considered poor at all!" Mr. Coser's use of quotation marks here is interesting. We didn't say "only" and we also didn't say "really," and the words do not aptly summarize what we *did* say. Our point about the 3,600,000 figure was, not that it's okay, but that it's not as bad as it looks—that most of these families were either unemployed or retired, "i.e., the low income was temporary or it was being bolstered by savings or help from relatives." This was in a discussion of Americans who are "permanently poor" because they hold bad jobs; it was this kind of poverty that we suggested was disappearing—surely not an original suggestion. (Even an article in *Dissent* last August suggested that "the proportions of 'status poverty' in the U.S. seem likely to contract. . . .") As for the number of families who can be considered poor, we didn't make any explicit pronouncements relating poverty to an exact income level, and if we had, we certainly wouldn't have said anything as silly as Mr. Coser credits us with. . . . Our $2,000 figure is higher than the standard set by most public-assistance programs, although it is lower

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than the $2,500 standard used by Professor Robert J. Lampman in the widely acclaimed study paper he prepared for Senator Douglas' Joint Economic Committee. (Professor Lampman notes, however, that there "is some precedent" for using a $2,000 figure, and several of his tables break down the low-income population according to both standards.)

One other point about poverty: In the course of explaining how much worse things are than *Fortune* admits they are, Mr. Coser says that "according to governmental investigations, more than one family in four lives below an income level considered essential to maintaining even minimum standards of health and decency." I am tolerably familiar with all the serious government studies made of distressed or low-income families recently, and I know of none that reached such conclusions; possibly Mr. Coser is applying his own adjectives to the government's statistics, or possibly he is stretching the definition of a "family." Anyway, the Lampman study does not support a "more-than-one-in-four" view. It shows that on a $2,000 definition of poverty, either 8 or 15 per cent of families were under the line in 1957, depending on whether the income included any non-cash items (which are principally important to farm families); and on a $2,500 definition of poverty, either 13 or 19 per cent were under the line. Professor Lampman notes that between 1947 and 1957, "the share of the population in low-income status fell over one-fourth of the way to zero."

Mr. Coser works hard in another passage to prove that our statements about "discretionary income" were also roseate: "Families with after-tax incomes of over $4,000, according to *Fortune,* have a supply of 'discretionary income' which allows them to spend freely over and above the necessities of food, clothing, shelter, medical care, etc. Such families 'can take a small flyer in the stock market.' . . . Were *Fortune's* writers to take an occasional trip some sixty blocks further downtown, they would learn that people with this income might sometimes try their luck at the races or with the numbers game, but hardly in the stock market. Indeed, George Katona, in *The Powerful Consumer,* sets the limits above which income can allow some 'discretionary spending' at a more realistic $6,000. . . ."

First of all, it is absurd to talk as though the discretionary-income level were a matter of hard reality, rather than opinion; we all have different notions as to what a necessity is, and *Fortune's* mention of a $4,000 dividing line indicated that the figure "has to be set somewhat arbitrarily." Katona does not attempt to prove that discretionary spending begins only at $6,000; furthermore, his $6,000 figure refers to total income before taxes, while our $4,000 figure is cash income only, after taxes. Since the articles were written, the $4,000 figure has been supported indirectly by the U.S. Labor Department. . . . Contrary to what Mr. Coser would have your readers believe, we did not suggest that a family can "spend freely" just by getting over the $4,000 line; instead, we said that "a family whose income goes up from, say $4,000 to $5,000 has only a limited range of discretion," and we suggested that a family cannot alter its style of life very successfully until it approaches a range around $7,500. As for stock holdings, it is unclear to me what I am supposed to find by going sixty blocks South. By my calculations, that would get me to about Morton Street, where I happen to know a few big plungers in the market; but if Mr. Coser intends me to end up on Wall Street, then I can report that the New York Stock Exchange says that over a million families with incomes under *$3,000* own stock. No doubt many of these families are not really poor, i.e., they are young couples just starting out or retired couples living on savings rather than income (such families always swell the reported low-income figures), and no doubt most of the families don't own much stock (we never said they did).

I might add that I am fascinated by the logical processes of a reviewer who allows that families just over $4,000 "might sometimes try their luck at the races," but in the next breath contends that discretionary spending only begins at $6,000.

DANIEL SELIGMAN

New York City

MR. COSER *writes*:

Mr. Seligman's letter reached me in Oslo where neither the book under discussion nor some of the statistical materials needed to answer him in detail are available. Hence a few general observations must suffice.

Mr. Seligman does not see why I should have mentioned the persistent under-utilization of our steel capacity since mid-1960 given the fact that the book I reviewed was written in 1959. He misses the point: the book purported to *forecast* trends in the 60's; this forecast is so far dismally wrong.

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The length of Mr. Seligman's letter, I cannot help but feel, is directly proportional to the extent of the unease felt in *Fortune's* editorial offices about the fact that their predictions square so little with the situation in which we now find ourselves. Granted, these predictions dealt with the decade as a whole; but a prediction that turns out to be rotten so far as the near future is concerned does not inspire much confidence as to its power to forecast the more remote future.

In re that divorce business: Mr. Seligman lacks a sense of humor; perhaps he worries too much.

When I used the terms "only" and "really" in connection with *Fortune*'s discussion of poverty, I did not mean to quote directly but rather to suggest the complacency with which *Fortune* regards the situation. Mr. Seligman now reiterates that "it's not as bad as it looks." This is precisely what I meant with the midtown view of economic realities. Mr. Seligman should go to one of the depressed areas or, say, to the Puerto Rican and Negro areas of New York City, either uptown or downtown, and tell people that "it's not as bad as it looks"—he will get some surprising reactions. I for one find such smug complacency about other people's fate insufferable.

Congress, Presidential messages, newspaper headlines talk almost daily about depressed areas, lapsed unemployment compensations, low minimum wages, and so on. In view of this, *Fortune*'s roseate forecast is ludicrously inaccurate, and its moral callousness is appalling.

Of course, definitions of poverty as well as the determination of income levels beyond which discretionary spending becomes possible is partly a matter of opinion. But I find it as revealing that *Fortune* considers that family income above $2,000 does not indicate poverty when most studies use higher figures, as I find it indicative that *Fortune* uses a $4,000 dividing line for discretionary spending when most other studies use a higher figure. This seems at least *prima facie* evidence of systematic bias.

The Cold War

To the Editor of Commentary:

Staughton Lynd ["Exchange on the Cold War," February] is quite wrong in comparing the 1944 situation in Finland to that of Poland—or that of any other Iron Curtain country—in his quest for the causes and origins of the cold war. Finland was never occupied by Soviet troops; and its geopolitical position . . . allowed the current of militant and victorious Bolshevism to bypass it at the end of World War II. . . .

In the only place on the Finnish front where the Soviets ever broke through—the Arctic region of Petsamo on the Norwegian border—they remained to stay, annexing the port of Petsamo with its rich nickel producing hinterland to the Murmansk "oblast" of the Soviet Union.

In regard to Mr. Lynd's conception that Soviet diplomacy was fixed on defensive rather than expansive goals, I would like to know how he describes the unwarranted and unprovoked 1939 aggression committed by giant Russia against little Finland. And, speaking of aggression against Finland, what about the annexation of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia?. . . As for Poland—astride all Soviet expansion channels and invasion routes—it would have been a prime target for Russian occupation and control, no matter which Polish government had been in power. The Russians had to enter Poland on their way toward Germany and Berlin. They had to keep garrisons and maintain full control over their lines of communication as long as there were, and still are, Soviet garrisons and bases in Germany. . . . Control of Finland is not vital to Soviet strategy, policy, military operations, and political domination of Eastern Europe. Control of Poland is. These simple geopolitical facts are the real roots and cause of the cold war. . . .

The Greek civil war in which the Communists, despite their previous agreements, attempted to take over; the nearly-successful attempts by the French and Italian Communist parties to stage armed coups in their respective countries; Soviet territorial demands and pressure upon Turkey; Soviet occupation of North Korea and parts of Persia—all this shows that during 1945–47 (and even in 1948), Russia was not preoccupied with maintaining peace and bolstering her own defenses, but with grabbing as much as could be grabbed without provoking an all-out nuclear war. . . .

Mr. Lynd regrets the "flexing of atomic muscles" and the Truman Doctrine. But these "atomic muscles" and the Doctrine saved Western Europe from Communist domination in 1946–1948. And the threat of nuclear retaliation is the only thing which still keeps the free world free.

Leo Heiman
London Daily Mail Correspondent
Haifa, Israel

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To the Editor of Commentary:

Commentators on the cold war, in their preoccupation with such questions as "When did it begin?" and "Who is to blame?" have tended to lose sight of an essential point—which is that the cold war has a highly constructive aspect. . . . Under the noisy surface of hostility a remarkable effort is being made to work out peaceful adjustments of conflicting policies and practices of the potential belligerents. . . .

To try to assign blame and identify provocations in the cold war may be an interesting pastime, but it is not likely to help us. We will never convince the Soviets that we are right and they are wrong—or vice versa. What we both need to know is—who will concede what in the interests of peace? For nearly two decades the opposed camps have been painfully and sometimes recklessly probing to find out what concessions might be extracted from each other, and the hope is that they may be able to define the terms of an effective bargain.

If anything is clear about the cold war, it is that it cannot soundly be regarded merely as a product of Soviet ruthlessness, or as a consequence of dislocations resulting from World War II. It is no longer enough even to recognize that sharp increases in the productivity and power of Russia and China have put acute pressures on the established ways of Western society, and that the West, by military, economic, and propagandistic measures, is belatedly seeking to compel the Soviets to abate that pressure. The reality goes deeper. In both capitalist and Communist countries many of the established ways have been outmoded by formidable changes in the world environment. Sharp increases in the rate of population and the scope of invention and communication are profoundly altering the power relationships of the past, both internationally and intra-nationally. These environmental changes require large and difficult adaptations by national societies if they are to survive and develop. Historically, peoples have seldom found the will to make such adaptations except in the anguish of war. The overshadowing question with which we now live is whether the two camps, in their common fear of nuclear war, are capable of adapting by more rational means. . . . Recent governmental changes in the United States and Russia suggest that both countries are putting a higher valuation on intelligence than ever before.

It is worth remembering that the present struggle is not the first cold war in American history. The period 1782–1812 provides illuminating parallels. Men then spoke of "war-in-disguise." I have tried to reveal something of the nature of that earlier cold war in a recent book, *The Coming of War,* and this extract from it may be pertinent:

> National power is not a fixed or even a predictable quantity for any considerable period of time. It comprises many variable elements. . . . A change in any one component of power could greatly affect the aggregate. . . . The problem of preserving peace . . . lay in the ability of the two nations to agree on successive modifications of their treaties—the terms of their competition—to accord with actual and mutually understood changes in their relative power. A realistic treaty made for peace; an obsolescent treaty for war. . . .

The Anglo-American cold war lasted for thirty years and culminated—unnecessarily—in real war. The years immediately ahead will determine whether the contemporary leaders of the great powers have the qualities of self-mastery, patience, imagination, and leadership—and the luck—needed for a happier ending. Meanwhile we have reason to be grateful that there is a cold war. The alternative does not bear thinking about.

Albert Z. Carr

Cape Cod, Massachusetts

Issues of the Lavon Affair

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his article ["The Lavon Affair," February], Mr. Abramov has succeeded in giving a detailed picture of the events that led to the present political crisis in Israel. Yet on the whole, his presentation is superficial, if not misleading. . . .

Mr. Abramov, himself a political figure in Israel, has of course the full right to believe that "provided the *étatist* tendencies of some of the younger set are kept in check . . . it is reasonable to anticipate the eclipse of the Histadrut . . . and a consequent strengthening of the democratic process in the country." But even Mr. Abramov's own party, though it desires the eclipse of the Histadrut, did not dare suggest that the victory of the *étatists* over the defenders of the "Histadrut's hegemony" was a guarantee for democracy. The party believed that free enterprise—or the eclipse of the Histadrut—might help maintain economic prosperity in Israel (though some would argue that this "pros-

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perity" is not shared by more than half of the population and depends upon foreign resources which are probably temporary).... Moreover, Mr. Abramov did not even mention several of the issues which were so vehemently discussed by almost all who participated in the debate about Lavon: the question of whether or not the Israeli army, or the defense of Israel, should remain taboo, beyond public control and criticism . . .; the extent of Mr. Ben Gurion's privilege to force his *dictat* upon his party, the Knesset, or the government, in the name of defense needs which necessarily excluded discussion; the question of *étatist* interests . . . over all other causes, moral principles, voluntary organizations, etc. . . .

MATI MEGED

Kiryat Tivon, Israel

Politics & Ideology in England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Birnbaum's reasoning in "Empiricism and British Politics" [February] is wayward.

1. He begins by identifying a central group of British social philosophers whom he characterizes as "anti-ideological." He finds it no objection to his list that though three of his five thinkers do live in this country (Berlin, Popper, and Polanyi), of the remaining two one (Talmon) is an Israeli and one (Aron) a Frenchman.

2. Next Birnbaum says that though these thinkers "refer only incidentally to Britain" in their writings and suppose that their repudiation of ideology is "universally valid," what they are *really* trying to do is to describe the British political scene.

3. And in this they are quite wrong. For, contrary to what they assert or imply, all aspects of British political life are dominated by "a heavy ideological burden."

Would it not have been more useful if Mr. Birnbaum had criticized the "anti-ideologists" *via* a consideration of their actual arguments instead of a reconstruction of their "real" aims? In the course of such a criticism we might at least have come to learn what he means by "ideology."

RICHARD WOLLHEIM

University College London
London, England

MR. BIRNBAUM *writes*:

Mr. Wollheim finds my reasoning "wayward." I should have expected a philosopher to tell me whether, in his view, I was "right" or "wrong." I must confess to as least as much difficulty with his use of the term "wayward" as he has with my reference to "ideology." Nevertheless, I shall attempt to deal with his objections.

1. I certainly do not find it an objection to my grouping of Messrs. Aron, Berlin, Polanyi, Popper, and Talmon (whom I did *not* refer to as "a central group of *British* social philosophers") that Professors Aron and Talmon are not residents of Britain. Professor Talmon publishes his books here, and Professor Aron's work is familiar to many Britons. Indeed, did not Mr. Wollheim himself refer in a review (in the *Observer*) to a "school" constituted by Professors Berlin, Popper, and Talmon; did he not (in advance of the book's translation) go on the British Broadcasting Company to praise *L'Opium des Intellectuels* and to draw lessons from it for Britain?

2. At no point in my essay did I say of these philosophers that "what they are *really* trying to do is to describe the British political scene." As Mr. Wollheim knows, they are trying to do many things; I did not pretend to be dealing with all of these. I *did* say that they referred, implicitly or explicitly, to Britain to substantiate their general demand for a non-ideological politics. I also said that their ideas had been used in current political debates, and generally used to limit the permissible area of discussion about British society and possible remedies for its current malaise. . . . I am quite prepared to document this last assertion.

3. I think that I have shown in my essay that British politics are at least as ideological as any other country's and, therewith, I have cast doubt on: (a) the philosophers' image of Britain and (b) their proposals for a non-ideological politics generally. . . .

As for what I mean by "ideology," I suspect that Mr. Wollheim is sufficiently well read in the social sciences to answer that himself. But since he has been good enough to write in about my essay, it would be ungracious to refuse to deal with even a rhetorical question. An ideology is a system of thought about society in which factual and evaluative assertions are fused to produce a judgment (often implicit and unacknowledged) about the distribution of power in the society in which the ideology is produced and propagated. . . . Critical reflection on social thought, on this view, is useful when it delimits the factual and evaluative components in ideologies.

I did not, therefore, criticize the anti-ideologists by attributing to them "real aims"—but I asserted that they are wrong about Britain and about the possibilities of

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a non-ideological politics generally. I have also intimated that they might, before talking so much about "empiricism," scrutinize Britain (and Western society generally) anew: this might make their work more relevant and less symptomatic or—if I may be forgiven the phrase—less ideological.

To the Editor of Commentary:

"No amount of pragmatic statesmanship can absolve a British government of the necessity of having to choose, soon, between its white cousins and its former black subjects," writes Mr. Birnbaum, obviously expecting the worst.

Mr. Birnbaum must be both surprised and pleased that Britain *did* choose (pragmatically?) and South Africa went out.

Incidentally, there is more in this Commonwealth than meets his rather jaundiced eye. While the French Community has vanished into thin air, former British colonies persist in joining the Commonwealth. It may not last forever (what human institution will?), but it is a very useful element of interdependence while it does.

David C. Williams

Chevy Chase, Md.

The "Meaning" of Work

To the Editor of Commentary:

While I am grateful for the thoughtful review which Ronald Gross gave to my book *Working-Class Suburb: A Study of Auto Workers in Suburbia* [February], he nevertheless credits me with views I do not hold, with arguments I did not make, and then proceeds, with a righteous indignation largely irrelevant to the major points of my book, to show me—and sociology—the error of our ways. (In the pages of Commentary, it seems, a sociologist's book is never guilty only of the sins of its author, but always of the Sins of Sociology itself.)

Unlike some, I believe it is legitimate for a reviewer to criticize a book for what it does not attempt, but should have. But Mr. Gross, without ever explicitly arguing that my book *should* have been a study of work satisfaction, implies that my major argument is that production line workers are quite satisfied with their jobs; that—in his metaphor, not mine—"the cripple loves his limp." I interviewed not a single cripple, but factory workers whose wages and whose suburban homes provide them with a style of life that most of them thought was pretty damn good. Without doubt, lots of them hate their jobs, but if Mr. Gross is going to call people who don't like their jobs "cripples," then the nation is maimed, and Mr. Gross can either do business in crutches or retire to mourn. I grant that it takes some tolerance of ambiguity to understand that men may hate their work and at the same time feel that their life situation is a lot better than it might be, and indeed, has been. To say, as I did, that men can and do spend eight hours a day at apparently meaningless work is not to say that they like it, but only that they do it, and apparently survive OK. I am aware of the persuasiveness of the doctrine of alienation, but I am also aware of a great deal of research on job satisfaction which weakens that doctrine. Whether or not factory jobs are "inherently meaningless" I really do not know (although it seems to me that helping to make an automobile—even a not very good one—is more honorable than telling lies about toothpaste). What I do know is that what Harvey Swados and others "find" about the alienation of factory workers, they would probably find about all other kinds of workers as well. Paul Goodman's recent essays in Commentary are a case in point.

Lest I be misunderstood again, I want to emphasize that all this is not to defend the myth of the happy worker nor to attack the doctrine of alienation (which I respect), but only to express a weariness with the way it is continually reasserted in irrelevant contexts as if it were a fresh insight, and with those who bathe themselves publicly in the self-congratulatory juice of ethical passion by pointing the convicting finger at that old devil, the amoral sociologist who happens to be interested in an empirical question at the moment his critic thinks he should wrap himself in a moral one. I myself happen to think that most men are far from satisfied with their work and, for the most part, always have been (even medieval craftsmen). If Mr. Gross agrees, doesn't it seem more useful to spend one's time submitting and supporting proposals to make work more challenging and "meaningful," and leisure more interesting than to howl alienation! and hurl misdirected firebolts at imaginary apologists for the status quo? For this kind of ritual exorcism is an even more insidious alienation than that of factory workers who, as Mr. Gross notes, have several methods of insulating themselves from the meaninglessness he attributes to their jobs.

In light of Mr. Gross's apparently wide knowledge of these methods, I am surprised that he didn't have more sympathy for what I was actually trying to do. Granted the

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virulence of alienation in the industrial system, a perfectly legitimate question to raise is the steps men take, consciously or not, to ameliorate their own less-than-satisfactory relations to their work. . . . What interested me was the way in which constricted aspirations function to reduce the pain of restricted opportunities. But to characterize the workers I studied as "resigned" is to miss the whole point. Resignation is for those who have harbored great expectations and have failed to achieve them. Modest aspiration permits modest achievement to carry with it a measure of satisfaction and contentment. . . . That the workers I studied expect relatively little and have achieved most of it is by no stretch of the imagination to say that the cripple loves his limp. It is only to say that aspiration (like opportunity) is unequally distributed in our society, and that this inequality has consequences. These relativisms are the facts of the case, and any moral posture which ignores their complexity is mere moral posturing.

BENNETT M. BERGER
Institute of Communications Research
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois

MR. GROSS *writes:*

Stripped of its vigorous rhetoric, Dr. Berger's rebuttal makes two points: (1) I misinterpret his book, and (2) I put forward irrelevant and vacuous counter-arguments.

The first charge can be quickly disproved. Dr. Berger accuses me of "implying" that the major argument of his book concerns work satisfaction. Hardly: I stated in the first paragraph of my review that his theme is the myth of suburbia, and I devoted over half my space to interpreting this theme, without even mentioning work satisfaction. I'm delighted that Dr. Berger has no criticism of this section, but less pleased at his failure to acknowledge its existence.

The second charge involves a really important issue over which Dr. Berger and I disagree—an issue worth serious consideration. I will try to define it by using Dr. Berger's own words above, instead of attempting to match his somewhat diffuse, metaphoric style of argument. . . .

Dr. Berger fixes on my characterization of the worker who hates his job as a "cripple." But he does not challenge my demonstration that his own findings show that (1) these men are trapped in jobs they loathe, and (2) they have the capacity to do better work. I think Dr. Berger *did* interview mental cripples—men whose natural growth has been thwarted or distorted by abnormal or inhuman forces. He casually referred to their "ever-present impulse to escape the factory."

Dr. Berger's real point is revealed in the dour alternative he offers me: if I really believe that many Americans hate their work (I do, and I think the society *is* very seriously "maimed" thereby), then I can "either do business in crutches or retire to mourn." Not a very inviting pair of alternatives, but fortunately for me there is a third possibility. I may do what I can to change the situation. Dr. Berger objects that I don't "submit and support proposals." I've done this elsewhere; in my review I did Dr. Berger the courtesy of dealing with *his* ideas, not my own.

What Dr. Berger interprets his findings to show, and what I think is false and misleading, is that the intrinsic quality of their working lives is less important to these workers than it is to you and me, because they have "adjusted" their aspirations to cope with the "pain of restricted opportunities." The trouble is, Dr. Berger pushes his "empirical" findings considerably further than they warrant. It is he, not I, who interprets his findings to debunk Eli Chinoy's conclusion that workers like these hate themselves because they hate their jobs. I merely ask that if he wants to interpret his results to show that they provide an "escape hatch" out of Chinoy's psychological trap, then the least he can do is ask the workers themselves what they think of their work. They should know if the shoe pinches, and if it does we had better look for other ways to make shoes. . . .

Dr. Berger's final sentences pose what I submit is an inadequate and untenable set of alternatives. Either we accept the status quo as "the facts of the case," or we resort to "mere moral posturing." Again, freedom is stifled by limiting our area of choice. But to assert that men "can and do" spend the longest and best hours of their lives in labor they know is beneath their dignity, beyond their control, and inadequate to their capacity, is not to resolve the industrial problem, it is merely to state it. . . .

David Riesman, writing in these pages, has suggested why acceptance of Dr. Berger's position, with its prodigal wastefulness of human spirit, is a social throwback at this point in the American experience: "a rich, heavily automatized society is precisely one that can afford to reorganize work so that attention is focused no longer exclusively on the product, but on the worker himself as a product of his work."

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

THE SUPREME COURT AND SOCIETY

THE SUPREME COURT REVIEW 1960. Edited by PHILIP B. KURLAND. *University of Chicago Press. 326 pp. $6.00.*

THE AMERICAN SUPREME COURT. By ROBERT G. MCCLOSKEY. *University of Chicago Press. 260 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by C. PETER MAGRATH

MODERN AMERICANS, enlightened by the writings of legal realists such as Justice Holmes and Jerome Frank, not to mention the Court fight of the 30's, know that within the robed judge dwells the man. But even if we realize that the judges of the Supreme Court are "nine men," we nonetheless expect them to be nine very wise men. Certainly no one can put down *The Supreme Court Review 1960*—intended as the first of a series of annual volumes that will evaluate the Court's work—without being impressed by the complex problems thrust into the judges' laps. The contributions to this book expertly study the Court's judicial craftsmanship and cover selected phases of its current labors in such complicated areas as obscenity, search and seizure, admiralty, federal taxation, and anti-trust law.

Of these discussions, seven in all, Kenneth L. Karst's "Legislative Facts in Constitutional Litigation" is outstanding. Professor Karst argues that the modern Court's work "demands fact analysis of the most particularized kind, with the most careful identification of the interests that deserve constitutional protection." He contrasts, for example, two recent civil liberties cases in which the Court invalidated restrictive city ordinances: in one, the majority opinion is based upon a careful inquiry into the actual effect of an ordinance limiting freedom of association, while in the other, a case involving a regulation of handbills, the opinion depends instead on a general denunciation of laws restricting free speech. Karst argues that the second judgment is far less convincing; the Court should decide between competing interests on the basis of legislative facts—the objectives of regulation, the means of achieving them, and their impact on the affected interests—and not by abstract propositions and beguiling absolutes.

Despite the variety of subject matter, the contributors here all have a common criticism of the Warren Court: that it deserves no better than a "C" in judicial craftsmanship. Though sympathetic with the Court's difficulty in handling such problems as obscenity, the critique in this volume parallels the friendly, but sharp criticisms of the Warren Court's craftsmanship that have been coming from prominent members of the Harvard and Yale law faculties. Indeed, as the preface declares, the *Review* answers the call of one of these critics, Professor Henry Hart, for a "tradition of sustained, disinterested, and competent criticism of the professional qualities of the Court's opinions."

Few Court observers deny that its opinions can be tightened and perhaps made more persuasive, and I agree with those who attribute part of the problem to an overburdened docket (for which the Court itself bears a share of the blame). Even so, much of this criticism misses the mark: the difficulty is less a consequence of a deterioration in judicial standards than of the deep doctrinal divisions within the Warren Court and of the complex issues it must face. The present Court, after all, surely has its share of judicial talent. But five-to-four decisions accompanied by weak opinions (characteristic of many of the civil liberties cases) and fragmented decisions with six opinions (typical in obscenity rulings) are a consequence of intra-Court disagreements on the tough political problems set before the judges. These problems, by their nature, are not conducive to consistent arguments which leave a reader satisfied with their logic and seamlessness; and the result is "legal" opin-

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ions that seem confusing and contradictory (yet is this not true also of a great deal of American political thought and practice?).

Perhaps, moreover, this confusion is inevitable—whatever the nature of the legal issues—when one considers that the Supreme Court opinions reflect a conflict between the Justices' function as a legal tribunal and as a political institution. Because the Supreme Court is both a legal and a political tribunal, it must be studied as such, and it is in this respect that the *Review* falls down. Professor Kurland himself acknowledges that "political scientists and lawyers, though dealing with a common body of materials," only engage in a limited interchange of ideas; and he hopes that the *Review* will provide a medium for a mutual exchange. But this worthy objective remains quite unfulfilled in this first volume, numbering as it does only lawyers among its contributors. Hopefully, future volumes will help break down that "splendid isolation" practiced by so many Court scholars. For too long, law professors have disdained to treat with those who are insufficiently versed in the mysteries of legal science, and political scientists have returned the compliment by dismissing lawyers as sterile and naive formalists—all at the cost of increased knowledge of the Court.

ROBERT G. MCCLOSKEY, professor of government at Harvard, is precisely the sort of scholar whose work could profitably appear in future issues of the *Review*. *The American Supreme Court* places him among the most provocative students currently writing in constitutional law. Thoroughly aware that the Supreme Court is a most unusual court precisely because it is a unique political institution, McCloskey stresses the tension that results from the Court's judicial form and its political role. He attributes this ambiguity to the persistent dualism in American thought between the impulse toward popular sovereignty, expressed in the elective branches of government, and the desire for fundamental law limitations, realized in the Supreme Court. But, he argues, insofar as the Court limits, it also rules; at the same time, popular concurrence has always served as a check on judicial policy-making.

To illustrate this thesis—along with its corollary that the Court is most effective when it seeks to affect policy in marginal ways—McCloskey presents an interpretive essay intended to extract the "lessons of history" from past Court experience. Though he views that history as one of distinct periods, each of which is characterized by dominant judicial interests and values, the Court is always in "an endless search for position in American government." From 1789 to the Civil War, the Court's dominant interest was the nation-state relationship, and preservation of the Union was its controlling judicial value. After 1865, the Court—wiser for the wartime ordeal that followed its overextension of power in the Dred Scott case—steadily reasserted itself and inaugurated what McCloskey finds to be the second great period of its history. With the triumph of industrial capitalism, the Court began to busy itself with "the relationship between government and business," and its major value became "the protection of the business community against the government." Until the mid-1930's, it used its veto power—inherent in the potential limitations of the Constitution's commerce and due process clauses—selectively and, from its point of view, sensibly.

Then, under the pressure of the New Deal, the Court once again eschewed a limited role by issuing a ringing challenge to Franklin Roosevelt's program. And again, it paid for its short-lived rampage in hard coin: loss of popular confidence, a serious constitutional crisis, and, by the time it came to its judicial senses and ratified the New Deal, an almost complete abdication of its supervisory powers over the economy. Since then, with the economy now off-limits and foreign policy problems clearly beyond its pale, the modern Court has sought and found a new role. A concern with free expression, fair trials, search and seizure guarantees, Negro equality—with, in short, protection of civil rights—has become the dominant judicial value.

This, briefly, is McCloskey's interpretation of Court history, an interpretation certain to enliven a literature that is too often devoid, in his own words, of "general analysis of the Supreme Court's place in American life." What bothers one in this analysis, however, is McCloskey's tendency to fall into what Justice Frankfurter calls "the traps of retrospective interpretation." While the

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Court's history can be usefully divided into periods with distinctive judicial "roles" and "values," McCloskey strains his materials to fit the judges into neat patterns. Thus, he labels the years 1865 to 1900 as a "subperiod" of "drift toward constitutional laissez faire." The judges of the 1870's and 1880's "had the will but not the way to protect business." *Munn v. Illinois,* a leading case sustaining regulatory power, is pictured as a stepping-stone toward protection for corporate interests. In a similar vein, Justice Bradley is bracketed with that darling of the corporation leaders, Justice Stephen J. Field. This makes for lively reading but obscures reality. Bradley, for example, more often than not upheld regulation; and, despite "concessions" granted by the language of its opinions, the actual decisions of the Waite Court majority sustained almost every important piece of regulatory legislation that came before it—and for its pains was roundly censored by propertied interests who surely knew the threat that was being posed by the decisions they were denouncing.

Moreover, McCloskey's description of this and other periods suffers from a failure to give enough emphasis to the Justices who are, after all, the life of the Court. Their distinctive outlooks, conflicts, and competing loyalties are subsumed by a somewhat disembodied "Court" relentlessly finding its "role" in history. Even McCloskey's penetrating study of the modern Court and its espousal of civil rights is marred by a one-sided focus on the civil rights role. Although undramatic, the judges' endeavors in administrative, labor, and anti-trust law, can hardly be ignored in discussions of recent Court history.

These flaws do not detract from McCloskey's main thesis: the lesson of history is that the Court is most influential when it governs within the limits of its capabilities. To those who today clamor for judicial absolutism in civil rights and tomorrow would scream "judicial tyranny" if the majority ruled against their desires, McCloskey offers a pertinent message. The Court of the past, he reminds them, "ruled more in each case when it tried to rule less, and that paradox is one of the clearest morals to draw from this history." Professor McCloskey has written a significant book.

STILL ANGRY

SCENES FROM LIFE. By WILLIAM COOPER. *Scribners. 379 pp. $4.50.*

TAKE A GIRL LIKE YOU. By KINGSLEY AMIS. *Harcourt, Brace & World. 320 pp. $3.95.*

Reviewed by ELLEN MOERS

WARMLY REVIEWED for the American press by no less a literary couple than C. P. Snow and Pamela Hansford Johnson, William Cooper's *Scenes from Life* comes to us as the fountainhead of the English angry-young-man school. The book is composed of two shortish novels, *Scenes from Provincial Life,* first published in 1950, and *Scenes from Married Life,* published in 1960. The earlier thus appeared four years before the fresh humor of *Lucky Jim* established Kingsley Amis as the most talented of young English novelists. Amis has acknowledged his debt to Cooper, and his own fourth novel is curiously close in theme to Cooper's first book—in theme but, fortunately, not in quality. Taken together, Cooper's *Scenes from Life* and Amis's *Take a Girl Like You* show how small a distance the English novel of bad manners has moved in a decade. They also tell a good deal, little of it attractive, about the British petty bourgeoisie.

"Petty bourgeois" is Cooper's own choice of label for the world of the first *Scenes.* The "I" of his novel, Joe Lunn, starts as a teacher of physics in the grammar school of an ugly provincial town somewhere in north England. (Though Joe comes from the petty bourgeoisie, his students are, he tells us, from the proletariat.) Joe has two problems to solve: how to continue making love to his girl without giving her the shadow of a claim to eventual marriage; and how to go on writing novels on a master's salary, without ever doing enough real teaching to convince anyone that he is really a schoolmaster.

Master Lunn, in fact, is a fortunate fellow. He has a decent job, a certain standing in the community, a large circle of friends and (offstage) an affectionate family, a willing girl, a bicycle, a half share in a weekend cottage, a publisher, and a letter from a distinguished older novelist to prove that his last book is excellent. The letter arrives in time to convince us that Joe's loss of his job (to judge from evidence, at least a

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year after he should have been fired) is all for the good. For Joe, who has no style or taste or sensitivity and never reads a book, is an effortlessly prolific novelist. And keeps a professional eye on the royalties.

Kingsley Amis's man is also a schoolmaster, obviously made for higher things, and terrified of getting married. But Amis's Patrick Standish, unlike Cooper's Joe Lunn, is capable of reflection and feeling, which makes his problems considerably more grave. Patrick rather likes teaching and puts a good deal of himself into it—enough so that he might find himself stuck in the job. And his girl is so attractive, and wants marriage and a family so passionately, so naively, and so sensibly, that she may very well get what she wants from Patrick.

Jenny is the most serious and most successful character in Amis's work, and she justifies this otherwise imperfect and unfinished book. She is an improbable but convincing blend of sexy good looks with solid domestic instincts, feminine gentleness with the toughness of the slums. One of the funniest scenes Amis has written is the triumph of Jenny as a schoolmistress—twisting arms, dodging verbal filth, and maintaining order among her little hoodlums with a ladylike ruthlessness all her own. Jenny rightly holds the center of the stage. But it is difficult not to worry about Patrick Standish.

Patrick's future, at the end of the novel, is left hanging. Without any particular talents or settled career, despite his verbal wit and cultivated mind, Patrick has nowhere to go—especially if married to Jenny who, with all her charms, is barely half-educated. Kingsley Amis, like all the angry young English novelists (it is their great quality), has no use for self-pity. Their pivotal characters always seem doomed to trouble in maturity —a maturity they achieve, apparently, somewhat late in life, and to which the author himself rarely takes them.

IN FACT, William Cooper's second *Scenes* contains the one portrait I know of an angry young hero grown up. Thirty-nine and graying, still a bachelor, the Joe Lunn who reappears in *Scenes from Married Life* is not a failure. Crassness, laziness, philistinism, and provincialism intact, he is flourishing in London as a lesser but frighteningly powerful civil servant whose job it is to pass on the career possibilities of government-employed scientists. By the end of the book our Joe is moving on to the rank of Assistant Secretary.

Lecturing a few years ago about the widening gap between the two intellectual cultures, C. P. Snow pointed the moral. Young men with a science degree, though their ability be modest, know that they are guaranteed "a comfortable job," as Sir Charles said, "while their contemporaries and counterparts in English or History will be lucky to earn 60 per cent as much. No young scientist of any talent would feel that he isn't wanted or that his work is ridiculous, as did the hero of *Lucky Jim,* and in fact, some of the disgruntlement of Amis and his associates is the disgruntlement of the underemployed arts graduate." Without much apparent interest in the subject, Joe Lunn has cannily provided himself with training in physics. He will therefore be fully employed while Amis's heroes—a history instructor, a librarian, a literary critic, and now in *Take a Girl Like You,* a Latin teacher—must be underemployed.

In Joe Lunn's case it is the degree alone that counts. Joe does not think of himself as a scientist in the vanguard of the new revolution. He claims to be an Artist turning out, as he says, small masterpieces of universal significance. (If Joe's novels are really like Cooper's, then slang, purple passages, skimpy plots, bad grammar, careless characterization, and rather flat jokes must be the hallmark of his style.) His rule for success would, then, seem to be: take a science degree, but write novels. And don't marry until you are forty and established. And play the harmless fool. And keep up your university connections, for Joe does not make his own way in the world. His older friend Robert, Oxford don, upper civil servant, and another part-time novelist, finds Joe his job and gets him promoted.

It would be unfair to say that Joe Lunn's success is impossible. Joe says his novels are True; C. P. Snow writes that Cooper's novels are True. The dust jacket says that William Cooper (a pen-name) took his degree in physics at Cambridge, wrote novels, and moved up through the Civil Service to his present position "as consultant on scientific and engineering personnel to the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority." The author well knows, then, the stages of Joe

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Lunn's success—in the same arena, incidentally, that Sir Charles Snow has inhabited and described with an altogether un-Cooperish power and understanding. The objection to Cooper's scenes from life is not that they are untrue, but that their truth is narrow, provincial, unhistoric—in a bad sense, childish. Behind Joe Lunn's behavior (and, in varying degrees, that of the heroes of Braine, Wain, and Amis) lies a snobbish affectation of petty bourgeois mannerisms: anti-intellectualism, laziness, boorishness. The source of their bitterness (which Dwight Macdonald and Edmund Wilson have been somewhat at a loss to understand) is resentment of the surface refinements of the upper classes—such things as good speech, cleanliness, taste, even the ability to make what Joe Lunn calls a "moral choice" —which the angry young English writers cannot separate from social class.

The writer who concentrates on the surface mannerisms of class risks becoming a merely fashionable novelist. The satire of Evelyn Waugh, to whom Amis and his colleagues have been too readily compared, is never, in this or any other sense, trivial. Nor is the quiet deadpan humor of Camus, whose novels reflect social and economic conditions not substantially different from the world of the angry young English. The young English novelists are admittedly (and understandably) leery of the large issues that concerned Camus. But it is a relevant commentary on their narrowness that Camus, whose personal background was shabby and provincial beyond their imagining, never bothered about the trivialities of class. Among the English, Kingsley Amis most successfully escapes mere snob concerns. His excursions into the imaginary life of ineffectual people, and the reflection of this life in their grotesque faces and gestures, their inward monologues, are Amis's highest comedy. They touch on the human condition which traps us all—upper, middle, or petty in class.

With all their apparent rebelliousness, the angry young English heroes have no complaint against the sub-structure of their society, about which, in fact, they appear ignorant. They vote Labor from the tepid conviction that "socialism" has been good for the working class, but never for any larger or more personal reason. (Joe Lunn makes a little speech about how pleasant it is to see fancy perambulators in the grip of working-class mothers.) In fact, they do not want change. Things have been so arranged, in these novels, that they will make their way easily, without a tedious apprenticeship in the middle class, into the secondary ranks of the Establishment. So Lucky Jim is at the end plucked from provincial nullity to serve as private secretary to Julius Gore-Urquhart, a certain "rich devotee of the arts who made occasional contributions to the arts sections of the weekly reviews." Patrick Standish has a mysteriously idle, wealthy patron named Julius Ormerod. And Joe Lunn's sponsor Robert shores up his role as the protector of the Joe Lunns by marrying the daughter of such another, high up in the rarefied air of the uppermost Civil Service. Some tip-top toff, the Establishment figure, is waiting 'round the bend of Cooper's and even Amis's little world; his power may be feared or hated, but it is not questioned.

"Political sentiment," says Joe Lunn with habitual bravado, "does not seem to be a suitable subject for literary art. If you doubt it you have only to read a few pages of any novel by a high-minded Marxist." Joe is nowhere near so colorful on the subject of Marxists as Marx was about the Joe Lunns of the petty bourgeoisie—"the 'dangerous class,' the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the oldest layers of the old society, [which] may here and there be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue." They just don't write like the old sod any more, as Joe Lunn would say.

JEWISH ISOLATIONISM

JEWISH EXISTENCE. By IGNAZ MAYBAUM. *Valentine Mitchell (London). 189 pp.*

Reviewed by WALTER H. PLAUT

SINCE ITS FOUNDING, the State of Israel has continued to evoke feelings of pride and sympathy, as well as philanthropic and political support, from the Jews of the world. They trek to her cities and countryside in ever-growing numbers, are entertained by her bittersweet folk singers and delicate Imbal dancers, and acquire her *objets d'art.*

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But in terms of their *Jewish* existence, as distinct from existence as nationals of their respective countries, the Jewish state has hardly touched them. The long-standing hope that the state would revitalize and unify the religious life of the Diaspora has not been realized. Indeed, the recent relations between Israel and the Diaspora indicate that the reality of dispersion, and not the ideal of full connection, is likely to prevail.

What we require, then, is an exposition of the Jewish *raison d'être* outside of Zion, a rationale for organized Jewish existence in a self-contained, self-directed community. Ignaz Maybaum's new book attempts to meet this need, and he begins by posing the right questions: What is it that makes the Jew hold to his Jewishness in a civilization that seems to overwhelm this very Jewishness on every side? Is his existence sufficiently distinct from the Gentile's to justify his continuing as a Jew, particularly in the face of his recent history of persecution and extermination? Does he possess a unique mission? Does he have a program that would transform his Jewishness from mute survival to articulate being? Are task and policy the same for Israel and for the Diaspora?

The questions are posed by Maybaum with honesty and urgency. The reader begins by feeling that, at last, one Jewish thinker has dared to interpret the Diaspora in terms of itself. But soon the book begins to disappoint, for Maybaum's answers do not really answer these questions. And while he provides flashes of brilliant illumination, too often his vision is blurred.

In brief, Maybaum's thesis is that Jewish realization is a matter of individual fulfillment and that the Jewish people live through the family. He believes that the Jew has the particular mission of changing "the history of the Gentiles" by serving as a kind of lay priest, who is just, merciful, truthful, and peace-loving. But he proposes that the Jew's mission as moral exemplar is received from the world of the Gentile: in his pious behavior, the Jew synthesizes the Gentile world's impulses toward reform, and by transmuting these impulses into a higher humanity, prevents them from turning into secular self-destructive pride. Zionism, however, has made the Jew into a political being and a proponent of Germanic concepts of *Kultur* and idealist philosophy; it has also made him into a hero-statesman, citizen-soldier, proletarian-peasant—roles that all run counter to his authentic historic task: to be human and holy through his relations with God. It is therefore far easier to be a Jew in the dispersion. In Israel, citizenship becomes the religion; outside it, the Jew is left alone by the state to be a Jew in private, alone with his God.

It is worth noting that Maybaum comes from a German background and considers himself the pupil of Franz Rosenzweig. (The influence of the school of Reform theology led by Abraham Geiger, Hermann Cohen, and Leo Baeck is also unmistakable.) As such, Maybaum is both a pacifist and a patriot, a quietist and a utopian. Typically, he quotes often from the Bible but rarely from the Talmud, and his doctrine of a Jewish mission is closer to the theories of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel (though he criticizes them fiercely) than to the thought of Akiba and Maimonides. In all of this Maybaum is consistent with the general cultural and theological position that developed in Germany around the turn of this century: emancipated, Western, non-Zionist, and viewing the Jew as primarily a religious being. What is all but incredible is that he has clung consistently to this point of view no matter what revolutionary changes were occurring during the Weimar Republic, the Hitler era, and the postwar and post-Israel period.

CLEARLY, A CENTRAL EUROPEAN, pre-World War I *Weltanschauung* cannot serve the 1960's and provide the relevant answers to our contemporary problems. For one thing, we can no longer do without the reality of the State of Israel. Jews of flesh and blood live in Zion, and Maybaum notwithstanding, they can "contribute" to the world, they can be "human" and "ethical monotheists" and participate in a fruitful intercourse with the Diaspora. Zionism is not inherently irreligious; it simply leaves controversies over religious problems to the individual Jew, as Maybaum proposes they should be left. But the Israeli Jew is helped at every turn—whether through the proximity of a hallowed past or through the convergence of the Zionist purpose with the Messianic hope in the future. In fact, the independent Jewish state, in which each Jew is free to mold

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his way of life after the spiritual pattern of his own history, would appear to be in a far better position to help him bear witness to the supreme values of Judaism than are the scattered communities around the globe where, more often than not, a Jew finds himself stunted in his religious development by the massive counter-influence of his environment.

It is a fact of Jewish history that Jews believed they had a special "mission" to perform, but the fact today is that only a handful of Jews outside Israel feel any compelling obligation to it. In the Diaspora the job at hand is to persuade Jews to become religious; then perhaps the issue of a historic role takes on living relevance. As is, one would probably find that the larger number of Maybaum's "Jews with a mission" reside not in the Diaspora but in Israel. Of course, a mission that must first be derived from the Gentile environment and then synthesized by the Jew is impossible in Israel, for there are no "others" there, but this merely illustrates that Maybaum's Jews are much more plausible on the printed page and in his own background than they are in reality.

Maybaum is right to point up the crucial role of individual choice in a free society. In a distinction-leveling and generally comfortable *galut,* the sentimentalities of our "sociological" Judaism will hardly endure beyond a few generations, so that Jewish existence will consist increasingly in the strength of each person's commitment to his religious beliefs and his God. But the question still remains whether the individual's piety can function adequately without community—by community I mean not *mishpacha,* as Maybaum describes the core of Jewish existence, but *k'hilla k'dosha. Mishpacha,* the family constellation, develops from a biological accident, but *k'hilla k'dosha,* the holy community, is a voluntary grouping of committed Jews who band together for the joint fulfillment of the covenant. Maybaum has nothing helpful to say about any such congregation of the future, for the absence of *community* in his program is—presumably—related to his abhorrence of collectivism, which he believes inevitably leads to statism—his antithesis of the kingdom of God.

In any case, Maybaum emerges as no less a Jewish isolationist than Ben Gurion, who thinks of *galut* Jews essentially as potential immigrants to Israel. Neither recognizes other ways of life that can lie outside the boundaries they define; both ignore vast stretches in Jewish history that were sometimes nationalist, sometimes universalist, and often both. Like Maybaum's, Ben Gurion's position derives from pre-World War I experience; just as the emancipated German community held that the Jew was the *Weltmensch,* the Eastern Jewry of the *shtetl* and the pogroms held that he dwelled in *Nachtasyl* (temporary refuge). In the space age, the question of Jewish existence can no longer be approached in either way. Zion has moved next door.

Yet, such doctrinaire exclusivists as Maybaum and Ben Gurion do call attention to the problem of the Israel-Diaspora relation, by pointing up the first requirement for such a vital relationship—strong, independent existences on each side. In terms of Israel this means, for example, a liberation from all the consequences that flow from economic dependency. For the Diaspora it requires a largely self-motivated Jewish life. Since the latter is the more difficult to achieve, one is grateful for anyone who recognizes the problem.

The questions will persist, but sooner or later, the answers will be forthcoming. And only then will the independent communities become inter-dependent.

THINGS AS THEY ARE

POLITICAL MAN. By SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET. *Doubleday. 432 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by ANDREW HACKER

COLLECTIONS OF ESSAYS that were previously published in various magazines usually make unsatisfactory books. Newly-written opening and closing chapters seek to develop a common theme, but the topics discussed are generally too diverse and the transitions too forced to impose a persuasive continuity. Yet there are a few heartening exceptions—by writers whose observations are sufficiently perceptive to be brought together between hard covers and so put on one's shelves. Some recent examples are David Riesman's *Individualism*

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Reconsidered, Daniel Bell's *The End of Ideology,* and now, Seymour Martin Lipset's *Political Man.*

With the publication of this book, Lipset has once again demonstrated his preeminent position in the fields of both sociology and political science; and there is little doubt that the book is already stirring the minds of many students in our colleges and universities. *Political Man* attempts to isolate the conditions which sustain democracy in the modern world. The opening chapters deal with the relation between economic development and political instability, and ask such questions as: Is constitutional democracy viable in countries where material want is pervasive? Later essays deal with the internal structure of trade unions; here Lipset asks: Does the development of bureaucracy undermine self-government by union members as well as the accountability of officials to the rank and file? A further section analyzes the status of intellectuals in modern society: Are men of ideas threatened by pressures—such as those created by majority rule and increased social mobility —which could be contained in more class-bound societies?

Lipset's answers to these questions cannot be summarized in simple yes-or-no terms, for he always attempts to take account of the diverse—and often contradictory—facts of modern politics and of life in modern society. One of the criticisms of academic sociology is that its empirical research is not overarched by theory, that its theory is not underpinned by research; Lipset is one of the few individuals who has intellect and energy enough to work in both vineyards. He can analyze the experience of new states, both historically and comparatively; he can also refer to the classic literature of the social sciences. On yet another occasion he will employ the statistical data of recent opinion surveys, or will treat the propositions of Alexis de Tocqueville and Karl Marx as hypotheses to be tested by contemporary experience. (In one instance, the number of telephones per 1,000 population in Uruguay and the literacy rate in Norway become useful indices for verifying these hypotheses.)

There is no pretentious nonsense in *Political Man* about sociology-as-science. Scientists (and occasionally lawyers) can "prove" propositions by adducing facts-as-evidence; for evidence in general consists of hard facts—amassed by a settled method and acceptable to one's professional colleagues. But Lipset recognizes that sociology has no rules defining which data are admissible and which are not; his only claim is that he illustrates his points by means of a survey of our existing knowledge. At the same time, Lipset understands that citing illustrations is not the same thing as producing evidence. What distinguishes him even more from many other sociologists is his willingness to commit himself on significant propositions. He has the courage to take a stand, knowing full well that his conclusions will be branded as too hasty, too simplified, and too subjective by his colleagues who stick to the straight and narrow.

LIPSET'S APPROACH is remarkably free of moralizing. Though temperamentally a democrat and a liberal, he harbors no illusions about human rationality or social progress. His viewpoint can, I think, be illustrated by reference to one of his best chapters, "Working-Class Authoritarianism," for it analyzes a fact of political life which has been neglected for far too many years.

In a large majority of Western countries, the most articulate and energetic proponents of the liberal cause have been members of the middle and upper-middle class. This was true in the time of John Locke and John Stuart Mill, and it remains true today. In recent years, however, liberals have been fighting their political battle on two fronts. They have been concerned with correcting certain economic inequalities, and have attempted to do so—putting it simply—by redistributing the wealth of society. In this respect, they have lent their support to the poor, the ignorant, the victims of prejudice and discrimination. At the same time, liberals have also sought to defend political freedom and deviant behavior: here they have defended the heretic, the dissenter, the nonconformist.

Taken as a whole, the liberal cause has had its ups and downs; and its representatives periodically attain political power by wooing the vote of working-class constituencies. There are, in a word, more poor people than rich people; and because enough of the former see the liberal parties as agen-

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cies of economic redistribution, they put these parties into office. But the latter pay a price in the process. For the working class is liberal only as it is a group of Have Nots who want some of the things the Haves have.

Though Lipset applies the term "liberal" to the working class in general, he himself shows the Have Nots to be one of the most authoritarian groups in democratic countries. Lipset's findings, based, quite impressively, on surveys in a variety of democratic countries, are as persuasive as they are unwelcome. "In some nations working-class groups have proved to be the most nationalistic sector of the population," he writes. "In some they have been in the forefront of the struggle against equal rights for minority groups, and have sought to limit immigration or to impose racial standards in countries with open immigration." In matters such as free speech, personal privacy, and heretical behavior, the working class is quick to demand that society or the state curb, even punish, unorthodoxy. In short, the working class may or may not feel gratitude to their middle-class leaders for the economic gains won on their behalf, but they certainly feel no obligation to support the middle-class values of civil liberties and civil rights.

Lipset's findings here are suggestive, and their implications are worth spelling out. For even though there exists a hiatus—both of interest and ideology—between the working class and that segment of the middle class which is on the left, middle-class liberals continue to cherish their illusions concerning the tolerance of those they represent. To maintain this fantasy, however, to suppose that a large constituency for political liberty does exist, can only lead to an eventual moment of truth and an ensuing bitterness of outlook—a disillusionment I once called "the betrayal of the proletariat" ("The Rebelling Young Scholars," COMMENTARY, November 1960). One drastic means of avoiding such feelings is simply to forgo encouraging political participation among the working class. This proposal can surely be labeled as "conservative"; I would reply only that toleration has never been a favorite outdoor sport of the common man. It may be that unless the political energies of the working class are carefully channeled by institutions like trade unions, they will run riot over such constitutional safeguards as we now have. If the defense of individual freedom is to be sustained by a middle-class minority, perhaps the working-class majority must be kept at bay.

I HAVE SAID that *Political Man* is free of moralizing; yet Lipset's own political stance is not hard to detect. He is a liberal and a democrat. But such rubrics are insufficient, covering, as they do, a multitude of outlooks. One way to place Lipset more specifically is to recognize that liberal democrats, broadly speaking, tend to be of one of two temperaments. Both believe in social reform and personal liberty, but each focuses his mind in a different "direction." One prefers to talk about the distance traveled, the progress already made. Such an attitude is not "conservative," of course, for conservatives neither approve of reforms when first proposed nor boast about their acceptance when they become part of the established order. The second group of liberals, on the other hand, prefers to speak about the distance left to travel, the inequalities and injustices which must still be overcome. These liberals, for the most part, do not think of themselves as radicals; they are willing to work within the framework of capitalism and constitutional government.

Lipset clearly belongs in the first group. His temperamental preference is apparent in the areas he has chosen for research. According to *Political Man* whatever the problems still remaining in American society, they do not result from the excesses of free enterprise, the wrongs of racial discrimination, or the irrationalities of our foreign policy. It may be that Lipset, and others like him, lead two lives, that they keep separate their political commitments and their academic research. But I doubt that this is so. In *Political Man,* Lipset has defined for us the problems in modern society which he thinks are significant, and at the center of these is the preservation of stability and the amelioration of conflict.

Lipset's attitude is best seen in his closing chapter, "The End of Ideology." Ideology here means the myths and visions of the political left, and Lipset believes that its appeal has declined throughout the Western world. He concludes from this point that we have matured, that we are willing to live

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with the facts. Yet is this decline—which can be observed among academics and intellectuals, and among left-wing parties in general—as salutary as Lipset believes? Lipset hopes to supplant myth with fact. But by definition, "facts" can only be culled from the attitudes and behavior of men and societies, current or past. Empiricism, like it or not, forces one to concentrate on things as they are or as they have been. A description of how things *might be* were we to embark on changing the social order is bound to be speculative, not factual. Nor has it ever been established that evidence from the past and the present offer storm warnings about how such a future might turn out. The visions of ideologues, then, coupled with their mythologies about the world of reality, should be evaluated not on empirical but on strategic grounds. Even moderate steps forward can only be taken if there exists a section of the community which asks for a whole loaf, settles for half. Those who ask for half—because they know from a study of the "facts" that only half is "possible"—either end up with a quarter or, most often, with nothing at all. Liberals such as Lipset are proud of the progress which has been made in the Western world, but it is curious that they never acknowledge the fact that we have gotten as far as we have precisely because of the ideologies which stirred men to action. If such ideologies are in fact dead, then we have the best explanation of why we in the West are standing still.

THE FUTILE AND THE UNCERTAIN

THE WEDDING BAND. By SAMUEL YELLEN. *Atheneum. 170 pp. $3.75.*

THE ACROPHILE. By YORAM KANIUK. Translated by Zeva Shapiro. *Atheneum. 182 pp. $3.50.*

Reviewed by JANE HAYMAN

SAMUEL YELLEN'S *The Wedding Band* tells of an unhappy marriage. It is the sort of middle-class writing that tries to make barrenness palatable. Outwardly it descends from a vast collection of immigrant novels. The first person as narrator, the flashbacks, the anecdotal style, the homey detail are native to the genre. So is the realistic setting, here the poorer part of Cleveland during the first quarter of the century. But the theme of *The Wedding Band* underscores a depressing change in American conceptions of success. The nervy, independent hero-on-the-make is gone. (When he does appear, as in some of the novels of Saul Bellow, he is ill at ease, like a Trojan at a cocktail party.) The aspiring classes, who spawned him, are back in the living room, now called the family room. There they remain, figuratively putting up curtains, like Yellen's narrator, Alexandra, college professor daughter of a Jewish papa and a Gentile mama. In household English she sings of the one adventure left to the unimaginative—a kind of dutiful voyeurism, an interest in intimate relations that is as self-righteous as it is self-conscious.

Despair breathes a little life into *The Wedding Band.* Apart from this genuine emotion, it is a mishmash of forced vigor, misplaced enthusiasm, and inadequate rationalization. Yellen's description (and presentation) of husband and wife as alternate "cat and victim" tearing at each other's entrails, is not softened by later talk of the virtues of endurance and "the flowers of man's compassion and man's charity." The marital garden blooms instead with frustration, stupidity, and cruelty. This, says Alexandra, is "the human condition." " 'What a piece of work is a man' " (*sic*) she chirps again, echoing Hamlet, but it is plain that she is chirping in the dark.

In an arena that has narrowed from the great world to the housing development, all men are equal and equally mean. Futility is the true subject of novels like *The Wedding Band.* To invoke Shakespeare in such a setting is grotesque. Humanism, once bright in American fiction, has paled here to a murky half-light through which can be discerned the hills and valleys of hell.

IT IS POSSIBLE to call *The Wedding Band* a Jewish novel but only because most of its characters are Jews. *The Acrophile,* an unusual first novel by Yoram Kaniuk, is less homogenized; it reads like a long Jewish joke. Kaniuk's hero, Daan, fights for his soul in a modern, Kafka-esque swamp. His professional bounce, however, is legendary—it recalls the old struggle to stay alive in a world full of crazy *goyim.* Loss of moral control is a common latter-day bogey. Logically

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it must lead to a loss of identity. But in *The Acrophile,* logic is abandoned; Daan jumps like a jack rabbit from one uncertainty to another and is rescued at last, good-naturedly, by the author.

The novel was written originally in Hebrew. Zeva Shapiro's English translation is strong, sensitive, and clever. Kaniuk, like his protagonist, is a young Israeli living in New York. His plaintive tale is told in piping prose that is as much at ease as its hero is not. It beweeps his outcast state and at the same time fairly sings with a natural delight in life: "Opening the window, what was left for me but to string myself on the laundry line extending above this uncourtly courtyard, and crow like a hapless rooster cock-a-doodle-doo to the lord of the universe who has forgotten my name?" The paradox is traditional in Jewish humor.

The Acrophile makes moral judgments on several levels at once. "Acrophile," a coined word, means lover of heights. Daan, who took part in a bloody incident in Israel, longs to rise above his sense of sin. He divorces the human race and becomes a child symbolically. His egotism is like the animism of childhood which assumes that the universe is an extension of the self. Plants and objects have consciousness: "yellow leaves . . . that would have liked to cry out my joy." In psychoanalytical terms, he reverts to childishness to escape the consequences of his crime; his odd behavior seeks from society the punishment that promises absolution. On the other hand, his step down from maturity, as it is understood by most people, may be seen as a step up toward God and a closer alliance with the natural order.

A third view links *The Acrophile* to the literature of absurdity. Daan appears as the last sane man in a world gone mad. Reasoned authority has decamped, like his Israeli officer, "leaving no address." Scenery and events are blurred so that it becomes as difficult to separate the real from the unreal as it is to distinguish between good and evil. The recurrent suspension of reality, the progression of fantastic incidents, emphasize a subtler lunacy in personal relations and social institutions. In this context, disengagement is the alternative to sickness.

The remaining possibility is that madness is relative. This seems to be Kaniuk's point. "God looks out from the other side of every road," he declares; choice is endless. Daan becomes a guide on top of the Empire State Building, a position worthy of Holden Caulfield. He has made no important decisions, but they have been made for him in the accidents of day-to-day existence. By recognizing his right to live, he earns the right to live as he pleases.

Unfortunately, the novel lacks unity. The roads to God must have seemed so many that the author did not know which to take. Many threads of story and thought are lost, little is resolved. But, at the same time, variety is the virtue of the book. The narrative sails off on a sea of imaginative opportunity —and humor, much of the time, keeps it afloat. This is interesting because humor is also the restraining element that makes *The Acrophile* a conventional novel. Kaniuk flirts with fantasy, with abnormality, with expressionism, with illusion; humor brings him to common sense again and again. This is not to disparage his obvious talent. He does what many avant-garde writers cannot seem to do: he explores, or begins to explore, unreality while retaining a sense of the fitness of things. Perhaps his next novel will weld more securely together the two subjects, life and dreams, so that they act as a single entity, moving toward a recognizable end.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

C. PETER MAGRATH, a new contributor, is a graduate student of government at Cornell who specializes in constitutional law.

ELLEN MOERS, another new contributor, is the author of *The Dandy* (1960).

WALTER H. PLAUT is the Rabbi of Temple Emanuel in Great Neck, N. Y. He reviewed *The Nineteen Letters of Judaism* by Samson Raphael Hirsch in October 1960.

ANDREW HACKER, who teaches at Cornell, writes frequently on political thought for COMMENTARY.

JANE HAYMAN, a young critic, reviewed *The Beat of Life* by Barbara Probst Solomon in our February issue.

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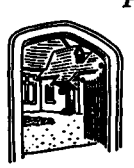

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